

Lebanese PM denies Netanyahu wants south Lebanon pullout

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri rejected a statement by his Israeli counterpart on Thursday that Israel wanted to withdraw from southern Lebanon but that Lebanon refused to respond.

"We have listened today to the Israeli premier claiming that Israel desires to withdraw from Lebanon and that Lebanon does not respond to this request," Hariri told the General

Assembly a few hours after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had addressed the same body.

"This is totally unfounded," Hariri said. "Israel tries always to give the impression that it is a country that truly desires peace. At the same time... the current Israeli government is working to abort the peace process."

He said the conditions Israel placed on implementing a 1978 Security Council

resolution calling on it to withdraw from southern Lebanon "have no relation whatsoever to the provisions of this resolution."

"Israel acts as if resolution 425 gives it rights over Lebanon at a time that this resolution gives Lebanon rights that Israel has to perform," he added.

Hariri was commenting on a statement by Netanyahu that Israel was prepared to withdraw from southern Lebanon if security

arrangements were made to ensure the safety of civilians on both sides of the border.

Netanyahu said he was "in the bizarre position of offering to withdraw from an Arab country and meeting with Arab refusal to negotiate such a withdrawal," Hariri said. "We really want Israel to withdraw. We want it to do so immediately. We want it to implement resolution 425 unconditionally."

'U.S. leading worldwide effort to destroy Ben Laden's network'

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States is coordinating a worldwide effort to disband the Saudi millionaire Osama Ben Laden's terrorist network Al Qaeda, The New York Times said Friday.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies are working with their counterparts in Britain, Germany and other countries to arrange for the arrest of as many of Ben Laden's operatives as possible, unnamed U.S. officials told the daily.

The idea is to arrest Ben Laden's people regardless of whether they took part in the August 7 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed 250 people, the officials added.

One official said the CIA, FBI and Justice Department had begun their investigation of Ben Laden's group well before the embassy bombings.

"Now we've accelerated our efforts, and gotten more countries involved. We are rolling up terrorists related to Ben Laden, but we are also getting terrorists who may not be related to him but who get caught up in the net as well," the official added.

The campaign comes as counter-terrorist experts here suspect Ben Laden is planning new terrorist acts against U.S. interests, the daily said.

Since the U.S. embassy bombings in east Africa, U.S. officials have helped in arresting 18 suspects in Uganda, seven in London and one in Germany. Three suspects in the August 7 bombings are under arrest in New York.

Taleban says U.S. pushing Iran toward war with Afghanistan

Agencies

AFGHANISTAN'S TALEBAN militia Friday captured a key district to extend their control in the central province of Bamian, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported.

The district of Yawkolang, 80 kilometres west of Bamian city, fell to an attacking force of 500 soldiers, AIP quoted a Taleban official as saying.

The anti-Taleban faction, Hezb-i-Wahdat, which represents ethnic Hazara community of Shiite Muslims, has disputed the Taleban claim, the private information agency based in Pakistan said.

AIP said Wahdat leader Karim Khalili had been assembling his troops in Yawkolang for a counter-attack on the Taleban who

seized his stronghold of Bamian earlier this month.

No independent information on the situation in Yawkolang was available.

Meanwhile, Taleban accused the United States on Friday of conspiring to push Iran into war with Afghanistan.

"America wants Iran to attack Afghanistan... but Iran should refrain from this foolishness," Jalal Din Haqqani, the Taleban minister for Border and Tribal Affairs told a news conference.

He said once Iran enters Afghanistan, its troops will not be able to find a way out because the U.S. administration wants to trap Iran in Afghanistan.

Iran, a powerful western neighbour of Afghanistan, has deployed roughly 200,000

troops on its Afghan frontier after the killing of eight Iranian diplomats and a journalist by Taleban fighters when it captured the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif in early August.

Tehran is demanding an apology from the Taleban, handing over of the killers and an immediate release of an estimated 40 Iranians.

The Taleban blames renegade fighters for the killing of Iranians, but has refused to hand them over to Iran, saying the killers will be punished by its authorities.

Iran's ambassador to Pakistan Mohammad Mehdi Akhondzadeh said Thursday the barbaric act of the killing of Iranians cannot go unpunished.

Haqqani said the Iranians, who were killed, were spies and not diplomats.

Iraq urges Turkey to end water dispute

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq called on Turkey to cooperate in resolving regional water shortages, after a meeting Thursday with Syria that was boycotted by Turkish officials.

Iraqi Minister of Irrigation Mahmoud Diab Al Ahmad said he hoped Turkey would "come to understand the importance of cooperating with the committee to reach just solutions for water distribution."

the official INA news agency reported.

Turkey has always been invited to the committee meetings to discuss the water problems but has been "boycotting them for years," said Syrian delegation leader Ibrahim Makhul, quoted by INA.

Syria and Iraq have previously accused Turkey of restricting water flowing from the Euphrates and Tigris

rivers, which rise in Turkey and run through Syria and Iraq, thereby reducing the supply to the Arab lands.

Al Ahmad said in August that Baghdad would seek legal means to stop Ankara monopolising the Euphrates, adding that his country would face "a serious problem if Turkey continues to build hydroelectric and dam projects."

No Middle East business summit this year due to regional conditions

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM — The World Economic Forum will not be sponsoring a Middle East and North Africa business conference this year due to conditions in the region, a top forum official has said.

"We don't think that the region would feel comfortable this year having a summit as in the past. What was a product four years ago isn't suited for this year," Gregory Blatt, director of the Geneva-based organisation, told The Jerusalem Post on Thursday.

Blatt said that, in lieu of a conference, the annual January gathering in Davos, Switzerland, will highlight the Middle East. He said the forum would invite Middle East

businesspeople on the CEO level to take part, along with the other 1,000 members of the forum, which brings together governmental and business leaders for high-level talks in an informal atmosphere.

Blatt said the meeting would not be a MENA summit, but the featuring of the MENA region at the annual session. He said the forum is standing by its commitment to having the business community play a role in helping cement the peace process.

This is break from the format of the previous regional conferences, held first in Casablanca, Morocco, in 1994 and subsequently in Amman, Cairo and last year in

Doha, Qatar.

The Doha conference, unlike the previous ones, disbanded without deciding on a venue for the next party due to increased Arab-Israeli tensions.

Several countries were broached as possible sponsors for this year's conference, including Tunisia, Oman, Turkey and Cyprus. However, no country volunteered to host the event.

A government official in Jerusalem said the failure to hold the conference this year is a "punishment to the region as a whole."

There were a few Arab countries willing to host the event, the official said, but they were pressured by



A relative of a 10-year-old wounded child, Hussein Harb, Friday stands at the entrance to her damaged house after it was hit by an Israeli shell in the village of Arab Salim in the Iqlim Al Tufah region in south Lebanon (Reuters photo)

Two Israel-backed militia members hurt in Lebanon

MARJAYOUN (R) — Two fighters of Israel's proxy militia were wounded by mortar fire and two civilians, a 10-year-old boy and 35-year-old woman, injured in other shelling in south Lebanon on Friday, militia sources said.

The source said the two South Lebanon Army (SLA) fighters were "moderately wounded in a mortar attack on their outpost in the western sector of Israel's south Lebanon occupation zone."

The incident raised to 38 the

number of SLA members wounded in the south since January. Twenty-seven have been killed during the same period.

Earlier on Friday, 10-year-old Hussein Harb was wounded during shelling from Israeli-held south Lebanon, a security source said. He was hit in Iqlim Al Tufah, a stronghold of pro-Iranian Hizbollah guerrillas north of the zone.

Hours later, a woman in the southern village of Arab Salim was wounded by mortar fire from inside the zone, a security

source said. She was the 51st civilian wounded in south Lebanon since the start of the year.

Nineteen civilians have been killed in the same period.

Hizbollah is waging a war of attrition to drive Israeli troops and the SLA out of the country. Israel, which has controlled parts of south Lebanon since 1978, set up a self-declared security zone in the area in 1985 ostensibly to shield its northern borders from potential guerrilla attacks.

Euro-Med culture ministers to meet in Rhodes

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under Austrian and Greek co-chairmanship, the Second Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers for Culture will take place on Sept. 25-26 in Rhodes, a European Commission statement said.

The conference falls within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and follows the Bologna Conference, which for the first time brought together the Euro-Mediterranean Ministers for Culture in April 1996, and the Thessaloniki Conference in November 1997, which brought together government experts of the 27 partners on the topic of Euro-Mediterranean audio-visual cooperation. The Rhodes Conference is the first sectoral ministerial conference to take place after the Palermo ad hoc ministerial meeting of June 1998.

After almost three years since the Barcelona Declaration, the ministers for culture and audio-visual affairs of the 27 Euro-Mediterranean Partners (15 member states of the European Union and 12 Mediterranean partners) and the European Commission will review Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation and provide impetus at the highest level for future cooperation in this field, the statement said.

The aim of this ministerial conference is threefold: to endorse the considerable progress made in the field of Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation since the Barcelona and Bologna Conferences, establish priorities and main trends for future activity and, third, constitute a platform for ideas for intercultural dialogue in the run-up to the year 2000, according to the statement.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10Cartoon — Postman Pat
15:30Clowning Around
16:00Drama — Neighbours
16:30Doc. — Scandi Nature
17:00 French Programme — "Faut Pas Rever"
18:00Drama — Wind at My Back (Ep. 1)
19:00Le Journal
19:15 French Programme — "Lo'eu de Colomb"
19:30News headlines
19:35 Quiz Show — You Bet Your Life
19:55Cinema, Cinema
20:30Prison
21:10Drama — Sirens
22:00News in English
22:30 Feature film — "Sweet Lies"
23:59Country Music
00:30End of T.X.

PRAYER TIMES

04:04Fajr
05:21(Sunrise) Duha
11:27Dhuhr
14:53Asr
17:33Maghreb
18:50Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

WEATHER	USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	NIGHT DUTY
Temperatures are expected to rise gradually with moderate weather conditions prevailing during the day becoming fine at night. Clouds will appear at low altitudes and winds northerly to northeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	AMMAN:
Min./Max. temp.16/28	Dr. Yusuf Rashid487592
Aqaba22/34	Dr. Ahmad Manna'535943
Deserts14/30	Dr. Khalil Jhalil478440
Jordan Valley22/35	Dr. Walid Masri567585
Yesterdays high temperatures: Amman 26 Aqaba 33. Humidity readings: Amman 38 per cent. Aqaba 53 per cent.	Firas pharmacy5661912
Following are the highest temperatures expected today in the following areas:	Al Asema pharmacy4637055
	Nairoukh pharmacy4623672
	Al Salam pharmacy4644945
	Yacoub pharmacy4637660
	Shmeisani pharmacy53477632
	Najib pharmacy53477632
	TRBID:
	Dr. Issam Saffi246858
	Al Quds pharmacy(—)
	ZARQA:
	Dr. Walid Hakeem982799
	Khalifeh pharmacy985417
	EMERGENCIES
	Food Control Centre4637111
	Civil Defence Department5661111
	Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341
	Civil Defence Emergency199
	Rescue Police 192, 462111, 4637777
	Fire Brigade4617101
	Blood Bank4775121
	Highway Police5343402
	Traffic Police4896390

ARRIVALS	HOSPITALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	Public Security Dept.4630321
05:45Beirut (RJ)	Hotel Complaints5605800
08:40Amman (RJ)	Price Complaints5661176
10:30Milan (RJ)	Wage & Sewage Complaints487467
11:15Aqaba, Paris (RJ)	Amman Municipality Complaints7771111
11:30Rome, Brussels (RJ)	Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
11:40Berlin, Frankfurt (RJ)	Overseas Calls010230
12:00Amsterdam, New York (RJ)	Central Amman Telephone Repairs4623101
12:15Geneva, Paris (RJ)	Abdali Tel. Repairs5661101
12:45Cairo (RJ)	Jordan Television4773111
13:00London (RJ)	Radio Jordan4774111
13:30Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)	Water Authority5680100
14:00Bombay (RJ)	J. Electricity Authority5815615
14:30Jeddah (RJ)	Electric Power Co.4636381
15:00Bangkok (RJ)	RJ Flight Information44-53200
	Queen Alia Intl. Airport44-53300
	IRBID:
	Princess Basma Hospital(02)275555
	Greek Catholic Hospital(02)272275
	Ibn Al Nafes Hospital(02)247100
	AQABA:
	Princess Haya Hospital(08)314111
	FOR THE TRAVELLER
	QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
	This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights is obtained on telephone (44) 52700 or (44) 523250.

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:45Beirut (RJ)	07:30Damascus (RJ)
08:40Amman (RJ)	08:45New Delhi (RJ)
10:30Milan (RJ)	09:25Beirut (RJ)
11:15Aqaba, Paris (RJ)	09:30Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
11:30Rome, Brussels (RJ)	09:45Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:40Berlin, Frankfurt (RJ)	09:45Tehran (RJ)
12:00Amsterdam, New York (RJ)	10:00Colombo (RJ)
12:15Geneva, Paris (RJ)	14:55New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
12:45Cairo (RJ)	16:00Cairo (RJ)
13:00London (RJ)	16:30London (RJ)
13:30Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)	21:00Milan, Rome (RJ)
14:00Bombay (RJ)	22:30Frankfurt (RJ)
14:30Jeddah (RJ)	23:45Paris (RJ)
15:00Bangkok (RJ)	01:30Madrid (RJ)
	04:30Bangkok (RJ)
	Other Flights
	05:05London, Damascus (BA)
	12:00Riyadh (SV)
	13:10Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
	14:05Vienna (OS)
	15:25Dubai, Muscat (EK)
	17:40Beirut (ME)
	18:00Paris (AF)
	18:05Frankfurt (LH)
	22:35Cairo (MS)
	22:40Amsterdam (KL)
	00:05London, Damascus (BA)
	01:05Belgrade (JU)
	02:00Rome (AZ)
	Royal Wings (RW)
	09:20 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
	08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport)
	20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights	Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:45Beirut (RJ)	07:30Damascus (RJ)
08:40Amman (RJ)	08:45New Delhi (RJ)
10:30Milan (RJ)	09:25Beirut (RJ)
11:15Aqaba, Paris (RJ)	09:30Karachi, Dubai (RJ)
11:30Rome, Brussels (RJ)	09:45Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
11:40Berlin, Frankfurt (RJ)	09:45Tehran (RJ)
12:00Amsterdam, New York (RJ)	10:00Colombo (RJ)
12:15Geneva, Paris (RJ)	14:55New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
12:45Cairo (RJ)	16:00Cairo (RJ)
13:00London (RJ)	16:30London (RJ)
13:30Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)	21:00Milan, Rome (RJ)
14:00Bombay (RJ)	22:30Frankfurt (RJ)
14:30Jeddah (RJ)	23:45Paris (RJ)
15:00Bangkok (RJ)	01:30Madrid (RJ)
	04:30Bangkok (RJ)
	Other Flights
	05:05London, Damascus (BA)
	12:00Riyadh (SV)
	13:10Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)
	14:05Vienna (OS)
	15:25Dubai, Muscat (EK)
	17:40Beirut (ME)
	18:00Paris (AF)
	18:05Frankfurt (LH)
	22:35Cairo (MS)
	22:40Amsterdam (KL)
	00:05London, Damascus (BA)
	01:05Belgrade (JU)
	02:00Rome (AZ)
	Royal Wings (RW)
	09:20 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
	08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport)
	20:30 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

No abnormal radioactivity in Jordan from Dimona nuclear plant — officials

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — After reports in the local press last week claimed that Israel's nuclear reactor in the Negev desert was posing a threat of radioactivity in the region, officials here Friday said daily tests "have not found any abnormal nuclear radioactivity" in Jordan.

"The measurements are in the normal range," Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki stressed that all nuclear facilities should be supervised by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"Jordan has made this message clear at the agency's week-long general assembly [which ended yesterday in Austria]," the minister added.

Although Israel has never officially admitted having nuclear weapons, it agreed in August to drop its opposition to the launch of United Nations negotiations on banning production of nuclear weapons materials, on condition that it would not be forced to accept international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

A draft resolution signed by Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Libya, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia

nuclear warheads at Dimona.

Mulki stressed that all nuclear facilities should be supervised by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"Jordan has made this message clear at the agency's week-long general assembly [which ended yesterday in Austria]," the minister added.

Although Israel has never officially admitted having nuclear weapons, it agreed in August to drop its opposition to the launch of United Nations negotiations on banning production of nuclear weapons materials, on condition that it would not be forced to accept international inspections of its nuclear facilities.

A draft resolution signed by Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Libya, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Qatar, Syria, Sudan, Tunisia

and Yemen called for Israel, the only state in the Middle East region that is not party to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to accede to it without further delay.

It demanded that Israel "not develop, produce, test or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons and to renounce possession of nuclear weapons, and to place all its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities under the full scope of the agency's safeguards."

The agency is considering the Arab states' resolution.

Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres virtually acknowledged that Israel possessed nuclear weapons during a visit to Jordan in July.

"We built a nuclear option, not in order to have a Hiroshima, but to have an Oslo," Peres told an audience of academics and the media in Amman on July 13.

Minister of Municipal and

Rural Affairs Tawfiq Kreihan told the Jordan Times that the Ministry of Energy and other involved parties are continuously coordinating to face any developments that might occur concerning the Dimona plant.

He said, however, "there are no confirmations" on possible nuclear radioactivity threatening Jordan.

Some local columnists warned against what they called a "veiled nuclear strategy" adopted by consecutive Israeli governments which, they said, keeps regional tensions high because of the uncertainty surrounding Israel's nuclear programme.

They hoped that the Arab effort at the agency's meeting would eventually force Israel to yield to international pressure, especially following reported signs of possible nuclear leakage or "even an explosion" at Dimona.

Princess Sarvath, the society's honorary president.

In an address at the ceremony, Prince Hassan said Jordan has been foremost among nations calling for the creation of a new international humanitarian order.

Prince Hassan called on representatives of world governments attending a meeting in December to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to remember that Jordan, along with the rest of the global community, has been struggling to focus attention on a code of conduct to highlight human rights and humanitarian duties.

He added that no economic or political successes can be achieved without due attention to humanitarian needs.

Prince Hassan said the world lost \$40 billion in the 1960s due to armed conflicts, \$70 billion in the 1970s, and \$120 billion so far in the 1990s, noting that the conflicts were responsible for the displacement of thousands of people and untold human suffering.

Paying tribute to the Red Crescent and the other voluntary organisations for their roles during conflicts, Prince Hassan noted that

these groups assisted some 1.5 million refugees who came to Jordan during Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

Calling on the world community to exert more efforts to alleviate suffering in times of adversity, the Prince stressed that humanitarian assistance should be granted to people in need regardless of colour, race, or religious belief.

In her address at the ceremony, Princess Sarvath paid tribute to the late Queen Zein, the Queen Mother, who established

the JNRCS, and Royal family members who followed in her footsteps in providing humanitarian assistance to the needy and people suffering from natural or man-made disasters.

Princess Sarvath also thanked Jordanian and non-Jordanian people who have worked for the society.

In recognition of the role played by the late Queen Zein, JNRCS President Mohammad Hadid presented the society's golden jubilee shield to her granddaughters, Their Royal Highnesses Princesses Sumaya Al Hassan and

Badiya Al Hassan and HRH Princess Basma's daughter Farah Daghestani.

Prince Hassan, Princess Basma and HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid were presented with the society's shield.

Prince Hassan presented the Independence (Istiqal) Medal of the First Order to Hadid.

Also honoured at the ceremony were a number of individuals and representatives of institutions who were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals in recognition of their humanitarian activities.

National Red Crescent Society celebrates 50th anniversary

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan National Red Crescent Society celebrated its 50th anniversary on Thursday at a ceremony held under the patronage of Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and Princess Sarvath, the society's honorary president.

In an address at the ceremony, Prince Hassan said Jordan has been foremost among nations calling for the creation of a new international humanitarian order.

Prince Hassan called on representatives of world governments attending a meeting in December to mark the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to remember that Jordan, along with the rest of the global community, has been struggling to focus attention on a code of conduct to highlight human rights and humanitarian duties.

He added that no economic or political successes can be achieved without due attention to humanitarian needs.

Prince Hassan said the world lost \$40 billion in the 1960s due to armed conflicts, \$70 billion in the 1970s, and \$120 billion so far in the 1990s, noting that the conflicts were responsible for the displacement of thousands of people and untold human suffering.

Paying tribute to the Red Crescent and the other voluntary organisations for their roles during conflicts, Prince Hassan noted that

these groups assisted some 1.5 million refugees who came to Jordan during Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

Calling on the world community to exert more efforts to alleviate suffering in times of adversity, the Prince stressed that humanitarian assistance should be granted to people in need regardless of colour, race, or religious belief.

In her address at the ceremony, Princess Sarvath paid tribute to the late Queen Zein, the Queen Mother, who established

the JNRCS, and Royal family members who followed in her footsteps in providing humanitarian assistance to the needy and people suffering from natural or man-made disasters.

Princess Sarvath also thanked Jordanian and non-Jordanian people who have worked for the society.

In recognition of the role played by the late Queen Zein, JNRCS President Mohammad Hadid presented the society's golden jubilee shield to her granddaughters, Their Royal Highnesses Princesses Sumaya Al Hassan and

Badiya Al Hassan and HRH Princess Basma's daughter Farah Daghestani.

Prince Hassan, Princess Basma and HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid were presented with the society's shield.

Prince Hassan presented the Independence (Istiqal) Medal of the First Order to Hadid.

Also honoured at the ceremony were a number of individuals and representatives of institutions who were awarded gold, silver and bronze medals in recognition of their humanitarian activities.



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, awards National Red Crescent Society President Mohammad Hadid the Independence (Istiqal) Medal of the First Order (Photo by Boghos)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent meets with American general

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Thursday received General Anthony Zinni, commander of the American Central Command. Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Fayez Tarawneh also met with Gen. Zinni and reviewed bilateral cooperation, particularly in military fields.

Tarawneh commended the continued strong U.S.-Jordan ties and voiced hope that the U.S. would continue its economic and defence support to the Kingdom.

Also Thursday, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Mira'i Kaabneh, and Gen. Zinni discussed cooperation in defence-related matters and issues of common concern.

Prince Ghazi married

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Thursday congratulated HRH Prince Mohammad on HRH Prince Ghazi's marriage to Princess Areej. Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Princess Sarvath, Prince Mohammad, Princess Tagreed, and other Royal family members attended the wedding ceremony Thursday. The ceremony was held at Al Manal Palace.

Arabic press lacks credibility due to government control, restrictive laws — analyst

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — The Arabic press at home and abroad lacks credibility and accuracy because of government control, censorship and restrictive press laws, an American expert has said.

"Many Arabic newspapers are largely owned by their governments, which turns them into state mouthpieces, instead of an independent press body," Middle East specialist Judith Kipper said during a roundtable discussion entitled "American View of Arab Media," held and organised by the Arab Media Institute.

She said that democracy is still in its infancy in the Arab World and that the Arabs still have a long way to achieve total democracy and freedom of expression.

"The U.S. rarely quotes media in the Arab World, because papers are semi-censored, government controlled, and restricted by press laws," she said.

Only two Arab papers, Cairo's Al-Ahram and the London-based Al-Hayat, are quoted by the U.S. media, she added.

Kipper added that strict press laws and censorship imposed on the media body by Arab governments make it equally hard for the U.S. as well as foreign countries to obtain any kind of information dealing with those countries' internal and

Arabic press lacks credibility due to government control, restrictive laws — analyst

By Alia Shukri Hamzeh

AMMAN — The Arabic press at home and abroad lacks credibility and accuracy because of government control, censorship and restrictive press laws, an American expert has said.

"Many Arabic newspapers are largely owned by their governments, which turns them into state mouthpieces, instead of an independent press body," Middle East specialist Judith Kipper said during a roundtable discussion entitled "American View of Arab Media," held and organised by the Arab Media Institute.

She said that democracy is still in its infancy in the Arab World and that the Arabs still have a long way to achieve total democracy and freedom of expression.

"The U.S. rarely quotes media in the Arab World, because papers are semi-censored, government controlled, and restricted by press laws," she said.

Only two Arab papers, Cairo's Al-Ahram and the London-based Al-Hayat, are quoted by the U.S. media, she added.

Kipper added that strict press laws and censorship imposed on the media body by Arab governments make it equally hard for the U.S. as well as foreign countries to obtain any kind of information dealing with those countries' internal and

external issues.

"On the other hand, the Israeli media is much more free and open, and information is widely accessible," she added.

She said that such easy accessibility of information granted by the Israelis explains why most Western countries can rely on that information.

"Since the early beginnings, most of our information on the Middle East came from Israel," she added.

Kipper, co-director of the Middle East Studies programme at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies and director of the Council on Foreign Relations Middle East Forum, has given lectures and roundtable discussions at the U.S. embassy's Information Centre, the Centre of Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, World Affairs Council, as well as dialogues with local media groups.

Her lectures focused on regional stability in the Middle East and American policies and views of the Middle East.

Kipper advised Arab journalists who face restrictions and laws hindering their performance not to look to the U.S. for help, but focus on abolishing these restrictions through collective action.

"You've got to do it yourself," she said.

She said Americans in

general do not know much about other societies, including the Middle East, and they "do not care" to know.

"Americans are not interested in foreign things. We need to raise the level of awareness," she said.

As an example, Kipper said news items about Japan in the U.S. media do not exceed 0.04 per cent, while Japanese coverage of U.S. affairs exceeds 40 per cent of all Japanese media content.

Kipper also criticised Arab journalists working in the U.S.

"We almost never see Arab journalists showing up at the White House or asking any questions... They don't do their work, they are inactive," she said.

She added that the Arabic press' lack of performance was a reason for them not getting interview privileges with government officials, usually granted to other press people.

She said the Israeli press in the U.S. has a very "active" performance.

"Unlike Arab embassies, which are only socially active, the Israeli embassy is always [aware] of events and prepares its media people with background information and briefs them before any important event," she stated.

Both the programme and host organisations are still learning from each other.

"There was a big question: Can an American live in this [conservative] environment?" says Lawrence Bartlett, the Peace Corps country director for Jordan.

Of the first 27 volunteers who arrived, eight left because the change was too much, or they did not find satisfaction in their jobs. Others have adapted well.

"It was as different as could ever have been imagined," says Emmott, who had living and travel experience in Egypt and Turkey already.

Changes often included squat toilets and sleeping on the roof. Privacy disappeared, as volunteers spent the first three months living with families and undergoing intense Arabic-language training.

There were more changes after moving to villages, where volunteers work on small income-generating or conservation projects, or with youths. Next month, education projects and English teaching will be

added to the list.

Integration takes time and cultural sensitivity. Anne Austin, for example, had lived in Saudi Arabia, where women must be covered from head to toe in public. Jordan is much less strict, and Austin was warmly welcomed by her host family.

But she still had to work to win the respect of the 20 boys at the Mamunieh juvenile centre, 20 miles south of Amman, where she used her training as a volunteer counsellor at the Atlanta Probation Center.

"Dealing with the boys depends on your personality, and sometimes you have to act like a man with them, and sometimes like a big sister," says Luna Ejailat, a sociologist at the centre.

"They saw me more as an American than as a woman, which helped me be one of the boys' more easily," Austin says.

The boys — all but five have moved on — enjoy the wood-working shop and learning the alphabet. But there are few resources; even crayons are at a premium.

"Most of us came here thinking, 'We are going to make big changes,'" she says. "But you must take baby steps."

Emmott's job has been to revamp the ceramics portion of a project backed by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation. He works with unmarried women, so before he began, parents were "spoken to" about his Peace Corps mission. Now they joke with each other in Arabic.

Tensions for the volunteers can mirror those in the Mideast, however. During the Iraq crisis in February, when U.S. forces were on the verge of bombing Iraq, riots broke out in parts of Jordan. Though volunteers were sometimes nervous, "their protection comes from how they live and where they live," says Bartlett. "They are integrated and close to families."

In Emmott's village, an Iraqi gardener at one point told the volunteer he wanted to go home "to fight the Americans."

"At first he avoided me but I kept offering tea," Emmott remembers. "Finally he said: 'I don't like [the policy of] America. But I like you.'"

— Christian Science Monitor

No need to boil water before drinking — minister

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — Water coming from the Zai Water Treatment Plant, which supplies 40 per cent of Amman's needs, is potable and does not need boiling, the government said Thursday, reversing a two-month-old advisory.

Health Minister Nael Ajlouni affirmed that Jordan's water quality, Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki said there is no need to adjust water qualifications because they meet the World Health Organisation's requirements.

Meanwhile, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported that Mulki, at a meeting with the Jordan Businessmen's Association on Thursday, urged the private sector to form a national company to participate in managing and distributing Disi aquifer water to Amman.

He added that several local firms will also participate in the formation

and the problem is under control," Hiari told the Jordan Times.

"But I believe that some reports on the water situation have not been made public," he added. "Therefore, I call for a national conference to end this confusion."

In response to Hiari's reservations about Jordan's water quality, Minister of Water and Energy Hani Mulki said there is no need to adjust water qualifications because they meet the World Health Organisation's requirements.

Meanwhile, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported that Mulki, at a meeting with the Jordan Businessmen's Association on Thursday, urged the private sector to form a national company to participate in managing and distributing Disi aquifer water to Amman.

He added that several local firms will also participate in the formation

of the company.

Mulki said the government will meet next month with representatives of international companies interested in the JD447 million project.

Ministry Secretary General Qusai Quteishat said 100 million cubic metres of water per year can be pumped from the Disi aquifer, located in the Wadi Araba region.

Recent news reports said Iran was interested in funding the Disi-Amman water project on a build-operate-and-transfer basis.

Mulki has said that tenders for the Disi-Amman water project, aimed at supplying water from the ancient aquifer to parts of Amman and southern regions of the Kingdom, will be floated at an international conference in Amman.

"The project will go to qualified parties and not necessarily to Iran," he said.

Bakery explosion injures 24

AMMAN (J.T.) — An explosion Thursday at the Zharai Al Khali bakery in Russeifa injured 24 people and caused extensive damage to vehicles parked near the building.

A report in the Arabic daily Al-Rai' on Friday said the blast occurred due to high pressure from overheating and lack of ventilation in and around the oven.

The injured were treated at Prince Faisal Hospital in Zarqa and were listed in fair condition. Minister of Interior Nayef Qadi was quoted Friday by the Arabic daily Al-Dustour as saying that all but four were released on Thursday.

The scene of the accident was inspected by Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, Qadi and officials from the Civil Defence Department.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

Qadi said the injured people were sitting in a bus near the entrance of the bakery at the time of the explosion, which shattered the vehicle's windows.

WHAT'S GOING ON

DANCE
* Korean Folklore Dance Troupe Performance at Prince Hassan Auditorium, University of Jordan at 8:00 p.m. (free admission).

DARAT AL FUNUN SUMMER 98 FESTIVAL
"Summer 98" cultural activities at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, to last until Sept. 30, include:

EXHIBITIONS
* 50 years of graphic art from Lebanon and works by Jordanian artist Sahel Hiari at the Main House.
* Works by Iraqi artist Samer Usama and by Jordanian artist Said Haddadin at the Blue House.

* Installation works by Jordanian artist Samia Zaru at the Byzantine Church.
* Exhibition of photographs "Memory of a Place" by Jordanian artist Hussein Da'seh at the Muscum.

EXHIBITIONS
* "Jordan-Kuwaiti Industrial Show 98" at the Amman International Auto Exhibit, Airport Road (Telefax 5690753), until Oct. 2.

* Paintings by Mohammad Polise entitled "A Tune and Colour" at the City Hall, Ras Al 'Ain (Tel. 4743158), until Sept. 30.

* Display of Bani Hamida and Jordan River Designs products (rugs, cushions, wall-hangings, and quilts) at the Jordan River Designs showroom, until Sept. 30 (Tel. 4613081).

* Photography exhibition entitled "Les Cite's d'Artistes a Paris" at the premises of the Association of the Jordanian Plastic Artists, Jabal Weibdeh, until Sept. 30.

* Paintings by Rula Shukairy at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until Sept. 30.

Peace Corps volunteers find learning, teaching environment in Jordan

By Scott Peterson

IRAQI AL AMIR — Before the Peace Corps came to Jordan, Dina Salman Abadi's image of Americans had been gleaned from U.S. television and movies.

That view began to change when Peace Corps volunteer Joshua Emmott arrived in this small village on the edge of the Jordan River Valley.

"From when I was little, I had the perception that Americans were extremely violent — that they all shot people," she recalls with a laugh. "But he was polite, said 'Good morning, how are you?' And I saw he wasn't carrying a gun."

Now, after more than a year — Peace Corps volunteers first arrived in Jordan in May 1997 — Emmott is accepted here "like we are all brothers and sisters," Abadi says. "Now I would love to go to America."

Jordan the first Mideast nation to welcome the Peace Corps, in part because of the special place the organisation holds in the heart of Her Majesty Queen Noor.

"I... grew up in Washington during President Kennedy's

administration," she told CNN's Larry King recently. "[I] was convinced that perhaps the greatest career... would be to be in the Peace Corps."

Queen Noor joined Hillary Rodham Clinton last week to inaugurate the new Peace Corps building in Washington.

Voicing her appreciation for workers in Jordan, she quoted the Prophet Mohammad, who said "the best of men are those who are useful to others."

Current tensions in the Mideast over the collapse of the Arab-Israeli peace process, Iraq's confrontation with the United Nations, and a general disillusionment with U.S. policies have fuelled a need for the Peace Corps to build cultural ties.

Jordan signed a peace deal with Israel in 1994 when the momentum for peace was nationwide. U.S.-Jordan ties have blossomed as a result, but what Arabs view as Israeli intransigence on troop withdrawal from the West Bank, as well as continued Jewish settlement, has made the "peace camp" small indeed.

"Lessons from region show that peace must be built

between peoples," the Queen said in Washington.

Both the programme and host organisations are still learning from each other.

"There was a big question: Can an American live in this [conservative] environment?" says Lawrence Bartlett, the Peace Corps country director for Jordan.

Kohl and rival in final push for tight German election

BONN (AFP) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl and opposition rival Gerhard Schröder geared up for their closing election rallies Friday, two days from the finish line of their increasingly tight race for power.

After weeks of criss-crossing the country, pressing flesh and pledging a better future, Germany's big two were cranking up their campaign bandwagons for the final push for votes.

Kohl, 16 years in power and seeking a record fifth mandate, was to appear at a Christian Union open-air rally in the western city of Mainz.

Schröder, at 54 relatively young compared with Kohl's 68, was heading to Berlin for a mass gathering to include a supporting appearance from Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima.

The Greens and the free-market Free Democrats (FDP) were also rounding off their campaigns with meetings respectively in Darmstadt and Oberursel in the west.

It will be all over bar the tears by late Sunday, when Kohl will know if Germans want him to lead them into the next millennium after overseeing the country's reunification, or pack his bags.

Polls put Schröder's Social Democrats (SPD) between two and four points ahead of Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its Bavarian sister the Christian Social Union (CSU).

Kohl's campaign theme has been "stability instead of risk," portraying his leadership as the guarantor of German economic and political security and the country's place among the world's leading nations.

He has focused on the damage his government claims an alliance between the SPD and the Greens would do to the economy, social progress and security.

In Munich at a penultimate campaign rally late Thursday, Kohl was hailed with chants of "Helmut, Helmut" by the 15,000-strong crowd.

"No poll, no editorial can elect the chancellor. So, please, go and vote," he urged the roughly one in four Germans still undecided.

The SPD says Kohl is a spent force, citing record post-war unemployment at more than four million, a stuttering economy and social injustice.

"We want to change and we need a new government in Germany," Kohl's rival Schröder told his penultimate campaign rally in the western city of Dortmund late Thursday.

The SPD won thinly disguised support Friday from the federation of German unions (DGB).

"Germany needs a change," it said in a communiqué, while insisting it was not telling anyone how to vote.

"We need a new politics that is more effective in fighting unemployment, which respects the require-

ments of social justice and which offers positive perspectives."

Despite polls putting the SPD ahead however, the trend is unclear and the shape of the next Bundestag, the lower house of parliament, could depend on the results of the smaller parties.

They are the Greens, the FDP and the former East German communists of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the only other parties in parliament.

Minor groups, including far-right parties, are not expected to get enough support to make the Bundestag.

The FDP is skirting dangerously close to the five per cent barrier normally needed to get into parliament, but the Greens seem relatively assured at some six or seven per cent, and the PDS, although not likely to pass five per cent, will probably get in via a clause over the number of directly elected candidates.

Polling stations open Sunday at 8:00 a.m. (0600 GMT) and first estimates, which normally are extremely reliable, will be given as soon as they shut at 6:00 p.m. (1600 GMT).

Kohl's day will be spent at church, voting with his wife Hannelore, a meal with his family and then a trip to his office in the afternoon for the first results.

Schröder is also planning to take things easy, pledging not to reach for his trademark cigars until voting is over. "Work first, pleasure later," he says.



A worker from Art Construction locks down the windows of a hotel on Miami Beach, Florida, in preparation for the arrival of Hurricane Georges (AFP photo)

Hurricane Georges bears down on Florida

KEY WEST, Florida (AP) — Gusty wind and rain lashed the Florida Keys early Friday, grim signs that Hurricane Georges was coming ashore after killing at least 250 people as it ripped through the Caribbean.

Five million people in eight Florida counties were under a hurricane warning, meaning winds of at least 120 kph were possible within hours. A million living along 480 kilometres of coastline around the southern end of the peninsula were ordered out of low-lying areas and mobile homes.

But many, including thousands in the vulnerable Keys, stayed behind.

"We order them to leave and if they decide to stay they're on their own," said Becky Herrin, Keys emergency management spokeswoman.

"There's nothing we can do for them if they stay," Georges was centred about 88.5 kilometres southeast of Key West at 7 a.m. (1100 GMT) with sustained winds of 160 kph and gusts as high as 185 kph. The storm was

forecast to be over the slender, 180-kilometre chain of islands off the tip of Florida by mid-morning.

The first signs of the hurricane arrived in Marathon in the middle Keys shortly before sunset Thursday, spawning the first of several waterspouts. As winds and rain became more steady, as many as 4,000 people lost power in Broward and Dade counties.

Schools, courts, state and federal offices and businesses were shut down in many communities, and scores of buildings were shuttered with the familiar plywood of hurricane season.

Jean Burnett was among about 60 people taking shelter at the Glynn Archer Elementary School in Key West. The 80,000 people in the Keys were ordered out Wednesday, but Burnett and many others were determined to ride out the storm. She wasn't worried about her house.

"No honey, I'm worried about my life," she said. Forecasters feared for those who refused to flee. At least 15,000 people in

Key West planned to ride out the storm, about half of the tourist town's usual population.

"We're extremely concerned that the land areas will be inundated with water and we'll lose a lot of folks down there," said Jerry Jarrell, director of the National Hurricane Centre in Miami.

Georges is the first major hurricane felt in southern Florida since Andrew, which caused \$25 billion damage in Florida in 1992 and killed 26 people in the United States.

After hammering southern Florida, the storm was expected to move into the Gulf of Mexico, strengthening as it moves over the water, and threaten coastal areas in the northern Gulf by early next week. In Louisiana and Alabama, officials started advance planning and warned residents to be wary.

The hurricane hit some Caribbean islands with 6-metre waves, and the forecast for the Keys called for a 1- to 1.5-metre surge. Some of the Keys are just 2 metres above the sea.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Spanish airliner crashes in Morocco, killing 38 aboard

MADRID, Spain (AP) — A Spanish airliner crashed Friday into a Moroccan hillside, killing all 38 people aboard. Rescue workers have recovered 18 bodies so far, the state news agency Efe said, quoting sources in the regional government in Melilla, a tiny Spanish enclave on Morocco's Mediterranean coast. The plane, with 34 passengers and four crew, was headed to Melilla from the southern Spanish port of Malaga when it went down in Moroccan territory about 20 kilometres from Melilla as it approached for landing. Visibility at Melilla airport was poor. Most of the passengers were Spanish military personnel stationed in the enclave, according to national radio. "It appears the plane crashed into a hilltop and broke into pieces," said Melilla regional government chief, Enrique Palacios. The 86-seat plane, a British-built BAE 146, belonged to a Spanish charter airline called Paukair. The wreckage was spotted by a Spanish air force plane as part of a rescue mission that included helicopters and ships. The plane left Malaga at 8:15 a.m. (0615 GMT) and crashed in an area of rugged terrain called Cap des Trois Fourches.

Russian fighter jet crashes, killing pilot

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian MiG-29 fighter jet crashed Friday while on a training flight and the pilot was killed. The crash occurred shortly after the jet had taken off from a military air base near the city of Chita in central Siberia, about 4700 kilometres east of Moscow, the Interfax news agency reported, citing military officials. There were no casualties or damage on the ground, it said. According to the report, the apparent reason for the crash was the failure of the plane's engines. The twin-engine MiG-29, which is capable of flying at twice the speed of sound, is a mainstay of the Russian Air Force. It generally has been considered a reliable aircraft and few MiG-29 crashes have been reported. Many recent accidents involving Russian military aircraft have been linked to a severe government funding shortage that makes it hard for the air force to maintain its fleet and deprives pilots of regular practice.

20 killed, 28 injured as schoolbus collides with train

NEW DELHI (AFP) — At least 20 people, mainly schoolchildren, were killed and 28 injured Friday when a bus rammed a train engine at an unmanned level crossing in southern India, officials said. The head of the railways safety division here said the collision occurred at about 8:40 a.m. (0310 GMT) as the children were being driven to school near Hyderabad, the state capital of Andhra Pradesh. "We are carrying on investigations. It is not clear who was at fault — the engine driver or the bus driver," he said. Railway officials said 18 people died on the spot and two later in hospital. The train engine was shunting between two stations at the time of accident. A government spokesman, meanwhile, said Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who is currently attending the U.N. General Assembly session in New York, had expressed his grief over the tragedy and extended his sympathies to those injured. A school bus disaster that drowned 28 children in a New Delhi river early this year sparked off nationwide concerns for road safety needs.

Mystery Mitterrand lover writes kiss-and-tell novel

PARIS (AFP) — A mystery novelist writing under a pseudonym has written a book on her affair with the late French President Francois Mitterrand, publishers Plon said Friday. The "emotional and nostalgic" tale is written under the pseudonym Jeanne Dautun and recounts in the first person the love-affair between herself and a major political figure in the winter of 1966 through the summer of 1967. Plon said the book, said to be the work of a major French literary figure, does not name the late president, but he is easily identifiable from the story. "Un ami d'autrefois" (A lover from another age) will be published on Oct. 1. Mitterrand, who died from prostate cancer in 1996, met the fashionable woman writer after he forced President Charles de Gaulle to a run-off in presidential in 1965. Rumours Friday said the president's lover might have been journalist Francoise Giroud, who, questioned, said: "This is a laugh." Other possible candidates were broadcaster Michele Cotta and novelist Francoise Sagan. Mitterrand, who was notorious for his extra-marital affairs, recognised his illegitimate daughter Mazarine in the final year of his presidency in 1995.

Major find of old coins, jewellery made

VIENNA, Austria (AP) — An Austrian farmer ploughing his field unearthed a valuable trove of old silver coins and medieval jewellery, a museum announced Friday. The Upper Austrian Provincial Museum described the treasure as "the largest ensemble of late medieval jewellery ever found in Europe," the Austria Press Agency reported. Experts date the jewellery and the 6,000 coins, some minted as far away as England and Jerusalem, from the late 13th century. The items were recently found in the field near Freistadt, about 140 kilometres northwest of Vienna. The museum paid a reward of about one million schillings (\$80,000) reward to the farmer and another person, the agency reported.

Russian money woes delay next cargo shipment to Mir

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's money problems have forced a two-week delay in sending up the next cargo ship to the Mir space station, a news report said Friday. The supply ship, which will carry food, water, fuel and New Year's presents for the crew, was to go up on Oct. 15, but is now scheduled to lift off around the end of October, said Mikhail Sinelschikov of the Russian Space Agency's manned mission programme. The Progress cargo ship has been completed and is already at the launch site, the Baikonur space centre in neighbouring Kazakhstan. Sinelschikov told the ITAR-TASS news agency. However, the space agency has not been able to purchase the Soyuz booster rocket needed to send the cargo ship into orbit, he said. The Mir's current crew, Russian cosmonauts Gennady Padalka and Sergei Avdeyev, have been on board for six weeks. Money problems have also left the launch date uncertain for next year's flight that will take the last crew to the Mir. Russian space officials said last week they did not know when they would be able to send up a three-man crew with cosmonauts from Russia, France and Slovakia. The launch has been tentatively scheduled for February. The 12-year-old Mir is expected to remain in orbit until about June, when it will be abandoned and allowed to burn up in the earth's atmosphere.

Scottish nationalists gun for independence

INVERNESS, Scotland (AFP) — Riding high in opinion polls, the Scottish National Party (SNP) rallied its troops here on Friday with the battle cry: autonomy in eight months, independence "as soon as possible."

The 800 delegates gathered here in the Highlands for the party's annual congress applauded their young leader, Alex Salmond, a reformist who has transformed the SNP from a pressure group into a party on the verge of power.

The SNP, which commands 50 per cent of voters' support putting it on track to play a leading role in Scotland's first autonomous parliament since 1707, so far has outlined only sketchy plans for an independent Scotland.

But its success had already rattled Tony Blair's Labour government, fearful of a break-up of the United Kingdom on the horizon of the year 2000.

Emboldened by opinion polls which for the first time show a majority of Scottish voters ready to back independence, the SNP has pledged to hold a referendum on independence in the lifetime of Scotland's first parliament.

"Scotland must stop

whining and shifting the blame to the people south of the border... and start doing something about it instead," Alex Salmond was to say in his closing speech Friday.

"Labour is in a total panic. Lets make sure we don't miss that opportunity," a representative of the SNP young guard, Nicola Sturgeon, a 28-year-old lawyer, urged the delegates in a rousing appearance.

And the same audience roared with approval on hearing Kate Higgins, 31, declare: "Independence is a sleeping lion."

Over their four-day conference, the delegates nourished their dream which is the nightmare of "those in Westminster: the politicians who rule from London, at Westminster, 900 kilometres away."

Independence? "When people ask me when, I say as soon as possible," Alex Salmond said.

The British press, doubtful to begin with, is now avidly following the progress of a man who has been compared to the reformist leader of New Labour, the premier Tony Blair, who looks like he may be caught out at his own game.

"This is a great day for Scotland, and a great day for the United Kingdom," Blair declared after 73 per cent of Scots backed

autonomy in a referendum in September 1979, since followed by referenda favouring devolution in Wales and Northern Ireland.

"This is a first step on the road to independence," countered Alex Salmond.

Since, inspired by Blairism, Salmond has modernised the SNP: moderated the socialist and republican voices in a party traditionally to the left of Britain's ruling Labour party. And like Blair, he is accused of autocratic tendencies.

The attacks are likely to redouble when the SNP at last publishes a more detailed programme of government.

Among the unanswered questions is the key issue of how to fund social reforms, and tax policy. The party does want to increase taxes on the rich but also to lower business taxes.

It must also declare a view on the future of the monarchy and define the status envisaged for this nation of five million inhabitants rich in oil and gas revenues from the North Sea; a Catalonia-type autonomy, a Czech-style Velvet divorce?

In all cases, the SNP wants to keep close ties with the European Union, whose stand was overrun by delegates at Inverness.

New EU representative takes up post in Nigeria

ABUJA (AFP) — A European Union head of mission has returned to Nigeria three years after the 15-nation body withdrew its representative following the execution of rights campaigner Ken Saro-Wiwa, the EU said in a statement.

Finnish diplomat Veli Ollikainen has taken up his post, vacated in November 1995 by then head of delegation Lutz

Salzman. The European Union imposed sanctions on Nigeria in 1993 and toughened them in 1995 after the execution of Saro-Wiwa and eight other minority rights activists, convicted by a special court of murdering prominent pro-government politicians from their own ethnic Ogoni community.

The hangings caused an international outcry and also led to Nigeria's suspension from the Commonwealth. Relations between Abuja and Brussels have improved since the new regime of General Abdulsalam Abubakar came to power in June, released many political prisoners and promised a correction and the apology and the retraction the same emphasis that you

gave to the original report," Johnson told several hundred journalists at the Radio and Television News Directors Association convention. "Do not bury the correction, as many newspapers do, on page 3."

"The public expects it and I think it is the right thing to do, as painful as it is," Johnson said. "They will trust you more if you don't try to hide it."

CNN apologised on July 2 for its investigative report after an internal probe concluded there was not enough support for the charge that Americans used

CNN chief urges television leaders to come clean about mistakes

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — News organisations will fail if they're not truthful with viewers — and that means coming clean when a mistake is made, CNN's chief executive says.

Apologies should be done as loudly and emphatically as news organisations promote their best work, CNN Chairman Tom Johnson said Thursday, two months after the network's wrenching retraction of a story alleging U.S. use of nerve gas in the Vietnam war.

"I urge you to give the correction and the apology the same emphasis that you

gave to the original report," Johnson told several hundred journalists at the Radio and Television News Directors Association convention. "Do not bury the correction, as many newspapers do, on page 3."

"The public expects it and I think it is the right thing to do, as painful as it is," Johnson said. "They will trust you more if you don't try to hide it."

CNN apologised on July 2 for its investigative report after an internal probe concluded there was not enough support for the charge that Americans used

deadly sarin gas against war defectors in Laos. Two producers fired for their role in the story have strongly defended their work, and CNN faces a long legal battle with former soldiers who felt they were defamed.

CNN no longer allows correspondents to narrate reports if they haven't participated in the reporting, spokesman Steve Haworth said.

Correspondent Peter Arnett was disciplined but saved his job in the fallout, in part because he was simply reading other people's work.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.
 جريدة شامية عربية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors
 Abdel Salam Tarawneh

Vice Chairman & Director General
 Mohammad Amad

Executive Editor
 Abdullah Hasanat

Responsible Editor
 Elia Nasrallah

Editorial and Advertising offices
 Jordan Press Foundation,
 University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman

Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585

Facsimile: Editorial: 5696183, Advertising: 5693337

E-mail: jtimes@go.com.jo

Web Site: http://www.access2arabia.com/jordantimes/

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times Advertising Department

Fresh start

AFTER GETTING a pledge from the prime minister to fight corruption, poverty, unemployment, nepotism, red-tape, water contamination and improve ties with the Arab World, the Lower House of Parliament granted the government of Faysal Tarawneh an overwhelming vote of confidence. Sixty four deputies voted in favour of the Tarawneh cabinet, a record only matched by the government of former Prime Minister Mudar Badran in 1989.

One outstanding feature of the parliamentary debate was the collective vote of confidence by a group of 53 deputies who qualified their approval by insisting on a parliamentary review of the performance of the government after six months. The demands of this group were extensive and ranged from a call for a halt to normalisation with Israel to fighting poverty, unemployment and corruption.

The prime minister who assumes power with a clean slate, was modest, candid and honest when he refrained from professing that he has a magic wand to solve all the problems facing the country. Tarawneh's humble approach to the pressing national agenda seems to have convinced deputies to give him their support in the hope that his government will put the country on the right path again.

But could the government that won approval with flying colours succeed in resolving the challenges of the future as portrayed by the deputies? In his reply to the lawmakers, Tarawneh pledged to take all their views into consideration, a tall order that may prove not too easy to attain. On the controversial subject of normalisation with Israel, the prime minister shrewdly suggested that the good relations with Israel could be invested for the benefit of the Palestinians and other Arab parties.

On the Arab front, he committed himself to improving and strengthening Jordan's relations with the Arab states especially the Palestinians. Tarawneh rejected all allegations that Amman is in league with Israel and Turkey in a military alliance.

The prime minister also pledged to address corruption, poverty and unemployment. On these fronts the government must step in and step in forcefully. Above all the new government must show to Parliament and to the public in a few months how and where it has succeeded in these commitments. The group of 53 and their constituencies will be watching every step of the way how the government is responding to these urgent and pressing socio-economic crises.

That is why the days ahead can still be fraught with dangers and challenges even though Tarawneh's government has won a high degree of parliamentary support. The premier needs all the support and understanding that he can muster from all of us. As long as national dialogue, transparency and candour continue to serve as the basis for conducting state affairs, we have all the confidence that the new government would indeed succeed where all previous governments may have failed.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek Friday called on the government to go ahead with plans to open negotiations with the Iraqi government to secure water supplies from the Euphrates River. The writer, who was referring to government plans of sending the minister of water and irrigation to Baghdad to open negotiations in this respect, said the project would further strengthen inter-Arab ties and help sustain stability in the Middle East region. Dismissing as nonsense objections on the part of some circles that such a project would place Jordan's destiny under the mercy of another country, in that it would hold the power to cut off the water supply at any moment, the writer said Iraq could never take any action considered detrimental to the interests of another sister Arab state with which it has strong strategic interests. He said it is illogical to deprive Jordan of available water supplies which contribute to the Kingdom's efforts to solve its chronic water problems.

Al Ra'i's Raja Al Issa tackled the question of the continuous drain of the country's financial resources through the participation of official delegations in conferences and other meetings abroad. Referring to remarks by the minister of foreign affairs about the prospect of benefiting from Jordan's envoys abroad to attract foreign investment to Jordan's development projects, the writer said such an idea is most welcome under the present circumstances when there is dire need for cutting expenses. Furthermore, Jordan's embassies abroad should be empowered to represent the Kingdom at conferences and so save the country a fortune of hard currency otherwise spent on travel, accommodation and per diem expenses, added the writer. He said this is not a novelty, noting that rich and poor countries alike adopt such a policy to save the state treasury unnecessary expenses.

Jordanian Perspective

Tough times ahead

THE DECISION by a majority of 64 members of the Lower House of Parliament to give a vote of confidence in the government of Dr. Faysal Tarawneh was expected. Jordanians would have been surprised if the vote had gone otherwise, since our experience of parliamentary life has never shown us any different.

However, the marked difference this time around is the joint statement issued by 53 members of the House, outlining what they see as the priorities of the executive authority at this juncture of Jordanian history.

Tarawneh has inherited a host of problems and crises from many of his predecessors. Not that it was the first time a Jordanian prime minister had to shoulder such a burden; nor will it be the last. The magnitude of accumulated problems has assumed very big proportions; again it is a natural phenomenon.

It does not really matter in the short-term whether Jordan gains any political ground in a regional context, or draws praise from the international community for its positive involvement in the Middle East peace process. What matters for Jordanians today are issues that concern their daily lives.

They have come to accept that under the present circumstances and conditions, no good can be expected from Netanyahu and the present Israeli leadership, and Jordan will be better off keeping that file closed except to lend moral and material support, wherever possible, to the Palestinian and Arab positions in the peace process.

Jordanians have also come to recognise that regardless of their country's sincerity and vision of a stable and secure Middle East where all countries live in peace and within secure borders, the country seems to be taken for granted by some of the key players. What many Jordanians want at this point is a temporary semi-freeze in Jordan's political engagement with the peace process that would also free the Tarawneh government to deal with pressing internal issues.

However, unlike most of his predecessors, Tarawneh has to interact with a hyperactive Jordanian populace, which, by defini-

tion, tends to be sceptical of all governments, and which is now in an exceptionally confrontational mood over the water crisis and growing economic problems.

That is going to make things very difficult for Tarawneh and members of his Cabinet. Every action taken by the government as a whole and by every member of the Cabinet as well as senior bureaucrats will be closely watched, and there will be hue and cry at every instance of where people see or suspect there is something amiss.

The people do have strong arguments to back up their cause: Unemployment has hit unprecedented heights, poverty is growing and the cost of living has gone up in proportion to the decline in the standard of living for many people. Add to this, the frustration caused by these problems a certain degree of that dangerous sense of alienation, despair, and social injustice that many people harbour, and we have most of the notorious triangular ingredients of public discontent.

The best asset the Tarawneh government has is its image; a team of people known for their honesty and professionalism.

While it is indeed a good starting point, it cannot, however, carry the government through difficult decisions that will have an impact on peoples' lives. As such, the Tarawneh Cabinet needs to take advantage of that image and move swiftly to address some of the root problems.

The joint statement of the 53 deputies and the vote of confidence of 64, summarise the general Jordanian mood today. That statement accurately referred to some of the festering sores in our society and gave Tarawneh the moral support he needed to come out fighting from his corner in order to correct some of the basic imbalances among us.

Jordanians in general do accept and acknowledge that the society needs dramatic action to solve some of its problems, and are largely resigned to swallowing the bitter pill if it is shared by all layers of the society and does not add to the burden of daily life of especially the poor strata of the population.

Will Tarawneh balance Kingdom's foreign ties?

By Ali A. Toukan

THE GOVERNMENT of Faysal Tarawneh will be treading a delicate line as it seeks to improve relations with Arab states, while it maintains ties with Israel and develops links with Turkey.

Although the government will focus on the domestic scene in response to mounting popular frustration with poverty, unemployment and corruption, officials and analysts believe that Jordan will have to rethink the merits of close ties with Israel and Turkey if the government's pledge to improve relations with the Arab states is to be realised.

To add to a seemingly impossible situation, 53 of the 80 members of the Lower House of Parliament submitted a joint statement Wednesday demanding that the Tarawneh government enhance ties with the Arab states and halt normalisation with Israel.

"Our commitment to the peace treaty falls within the framework of a comprehensive peace," the statement said. "But as the negotiations on all Arab-Israeli tracks are deadlocked as a result of Israel's arrogance and intransigence, and as higher Arab interests supersede any other considerations — as the government has pointed out — we demand a halt to normalisation with Israel as we only see this process as serving Israeli interests, and allowing Israel economic hegemony over the Palestinian market at the expense of Jordan's economy."

The 53 deputies, whose joint statement mainly focused on domestic issues, gave the Tarawneh government the vote of confidence Thursday, but said its performance would be up for review in six months to determine the extent to which it had met popular demands.

The signatories include former ministers who were involved in various stages of peace-making with Israel, prominent politicians, and centrist figures such as Ali Abul Raghib, Samir Kassar, Abdul Hadi Majali, and Munir Sobar.

Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh told deputies Thursday after winning a 64-vote-of-confidence, that his government will work to mend fences with the Arab World, but will continue its relations with Israel to promote the peace process.

"Our commitment to the peace treaty, in which we regained all our (land and water) rights, in addition to being principled, is in line with our will to do our duty and carry out our responsibilities in securing our rights and interests, taking into account Jordan's higher interests in its relations with Israel, and utilising this relationship to serve other Arab tracks to guarantee their rights," said Tarawneh.

He also urged the international community to "perform its role" in ensuring that Israel implements agreements it signed with the Palestinians, and called for a resumption of negotiations on both the Syrian and Lebanese tracks "from the point they formerly reached."

Expectations are high that the new premier, a U.S. educated economist who demonstrated great skills as head of Jordan's peace negotiating team with Israel prior to the signing of the treaty, can positively affect the Kingdom's foreign policies.

A poll carried out by the Centre for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan three days after Tarawneh took office showed that more than 70 per cent of Jordanians believed the new government could successfully improve ties with the Arab World.

Many Jordanians believe the Kingdom's ties with Israel have been

forged at the expense of relations with the Arab World. And some segments of the country's population, half of which is of Palestinian origin, would like to see closer coordination between Jordan and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), particularly as May 1999 draws nearer — at which time Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has said he will declare an independent state.

"I would like to see more balance in our foreign policy in favour of ties with the Arab World," a prominent politician told the Jordan Times.

In a recent interview, a Cabinet minister said the government will not halt normalisation with Israel, but will continue to push for increased bilateral trade to fend off growing complaints that the four-year old peace treaty brought no economic dividends as promised.

Last month, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, showed the extent of the regime's frustration, when he told an international conference in Amman that the much-promised economic peace dividends have failed to materialise over the past two years in the absence of political movement on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

"There is no tangible result to show for all our patience. Yet, we keep indulging ourselves in the hope that a successful end will soon unfold. Whatever economic peace dividends we have made to our people as a result of peace, have been practically belied by the events of the last weeks," said the Crown Prince.

These complaints will continue to be levelled by the government against Israel, said the Cabinet minister. "We can't stop the normalisation policy since it's part of our peace treaty, but we do have complaints which we intend to register with the Israelis," said the minister.

Jordanian officials and businesspersons have often complained that Israel's iron grip on the Palestinian market, and its own closed markets, obstructs Jordanian trade.

"We are under (pressure) politically within Jordan and from Arab countries. There has to be some justification for our relations with the Israelis," said the minister.

His Majesty King Hussein has little trust in Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and he has often blamed the policies of the Likud premier for the deadlock in peace-making. Lately, bilateral high-level visits have been less frequent, and there is evidence that Jordan is less enthusiastic to embrace joint ventures with the Jewish state.

But if the Kingdom does limit its dealings with Israel in line with domestic and regional constraints it will find itself in a catch-22 situation, as the "peace dividends" would be even less likely, officials and analysts said.

These days, however, the issue of Jordan's ties with Israel is not the only point of contention between the Kingdom and Arab states. Amman's increasing military cooperation with Ankara has Arab states worried.

The new government has repeatedly said military cooperation with Turkey by

no means entails joining the Israeli-Turkish alliance that has angered Arab and Muslim nations alike.

"I would like to emphasise that Jordan, with its Hashemite leadership, never was, and never will be, part of a non Arab alliance, nor of a (system) that doesn't include all Arab states," Tarawneh told parliament on Thursday.

Analysts believe the Kingdom's ties with both Israel and Turkey have further strained relations with the Arab World, while officials counter that Jordan's relations with Arab states would not have fared much better even if Amman had not sealed its peace treaty with Tel Aviv or kept its distance from Ankara.

Although ties with most neighbouring states may not be ideal, officials have said

Jordan never was and never will be part of a non-Arab alliance — PM

that the only Arab countries that do have serious grievances with Jordan are Syria and Iraq, and for reasons not attributable to the Kingdom's peace with Israel.

There is growing pressure for improved ties with Baghdad, from both the 'populace', — angered over the nine-year-old sanctions imposed on Iraq — and from Jordanian businesspersons, who believe economic and trade links between Amman and Baghdad would improve with a political rapprochement.

However, this seems unlikely at present because of the U.S. and United Nations stand against Iraq, and Jordan's insistence that Baghdad fully comply with U.N. resolutions. Jordan, meanwhile, is pushing for direct dialogue between Baghdad and Washington.

As for Jordan's relations with Syria, ties have been marred by decades of hostilities and mistrust, a former senior official noted.

Jordan has long complained that Syria meddles in the Kingdom's internal affairs and hosts groups hostile to the country, while Damascus accuses Amman of breaking away from the regional Arab order and working against the interests of Arab nationalism and unity, especially since signing the treaty with Israel.

Officials in Amman have countered that Damascus was also negotiating with the Jewish state with the eventual aim of securing its own peace deal.

Close military cooperation between Jordan and Turkey has done little to tone down Syria's accusation that Amman, Ankara, and Tel Aviv are forging an alliance that aims to strategically isolate it.

"The policy of appeasement (with Syria) does not work," said the former official. The Syrians have to begin to understand that relations with Jordan must be based on an equal footing, and Damascus cannot continue to see itself as "the big brother" in the region, he said.

This view was seconded by Cabinet officials in the present government — that closer bilateral ties should be fostered, but only after an explicit understanding by Syria that it cannot meddle in Jordan's internal affairs or its foreign policies.

"There has to be an acceptance that Jordan is first and foremost working for its own interests and sovereignty," said a

Cabinet official.

Officials have said that although Syrian-backed terrorism aimed at destabilising the country has stopped since His Majesty King Hussein personally complained to Syria's President Hafez Assad two years ago, Damascus continues its media campaign against Amman's policies.

Jordan, for its part, has always called for an Israeli withdrawal from Syrian and Lebanese occupied land, and Tarawneh re-emphasised this in his policy statement to parliament last week: "We call on Israel to withdraw from the Syrian Golan to the borders of June 4, 1967, and to implement U.N. resolution 425 calling for the unconditional withdrawal from South Lebanon."

Jordanian officials have traditionally contended that the Kingdom has few strategic foreign policy options, as it is a small country with few natural resources, in a hostile and unstable region, and a fragmented Arab World.

But according to a political scientist and writer "this conventional (thinking) should not be taken for a given."

He said Jordan often found itself in a predicament because it insisted on playing a bigger role and traditionally tied its fate to the West. "We must play a neutral political role," he told the Jordan Times.

Meanwhile, Iran, a country that in the past two decades has had Syria as its only Arab ally, has recently shown understanding towards Jordan's foreign policies, said officials and analysts. Following a rapprochement with the Kingdom after the visit of Crown Prince Hassan to Tehran for the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) last December, ties have been considerably boosted on all fronts.

But some officials contend that Amman can not afford to let its guard down with Tehran, because, as they see it, the terrorism option has not been completely dropped as a strategy by Iran.

Analysts said Jordan can balance all these contradictory factors. "Egypt has managed to do it since it signed its own peace treaty with Israel in 1979," said Director of the Centre of Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, Mustafa Hamarnah.

Egypt repeatedly criticises Israeli policies, but resumes relations, albeit at a cool level. But Jordan, a small country with less regional and international clout, has been unable, or unwilling, to play this game so far.

The other option the country can undertake is to start explaining its 'predicament' better, both domestically and regionally, said one analyst. "We are always either defensive or secretive," he said. "We need to start explaining better. That would improve things."

But in Syria's case this has already been tried and Damascus remains sceptical of Amman's intentions, said analysts.

The question remains, how long can Jordan continue juggling its foreign and domestic policies under the current circumstances? Most of those interviewed link a continuation of Jordan's present foreign policy to an improvement in the general standards of living.

"If the economic situation improves, then the government can get away with its foreign policy orientation," said a politician, hence the current preoccupation with domestic concerns, such as poverty, unemployment, and corruption. But, once again, Jordan will find itself to a large extent dependent on regional factors for an improvement in its economic situation.

Dr. Musa Keilani

LETTERS

We the Fools

To the editor:

WHETHER THE Clintons reunite on Jerry Springer, as Rami G. Khouri suggests, or whether they do so privately, as Jomana Wael Karadshah hopes, is beside the point. As Americans turn inward to sort out the current debacle, what we find may surprise friends around the globe — for it is entirely counter-intuitive. It is called "The New McCarthyism."

In response to Watergate, Congress passed the Special Prosecutor law which relieved them of the task of investigating Presidential impropriety. Each House also passed rules that would assure that ethics committees would monitor members.

What have these new rules brought us? A wave of partisan cleavage that has never before been seen in our republic. Each time a leader from one party gains power — enough power to push through genuine and needed reform — he is brought up on ethics charges for using money from the wrong account to pay his baby-sitter or pinching someone you-know-where 23 years ago. His career ends. Policy-making is stalled. And the opposing party celebrates.

What is worse, the fact that Congress approves the aggressiveness of this Special Prosecutor assures that every president in the future will be weakened by similar investigations and will likely face impeachment hearings. The power of the only leader that all of America unites to elect is simply eviscerated. Our checks and balances, so envied abroad, are out of whack.

Pathetically, we the People merely gather new evidence that proves the ineffectiveness of elected officials and the unmanageability of our national government. We watch, powerless, cynical and, now, shame-faced. We the People... or We the Fools?

One Republican on the House Judiciary Committee was told that 70% of Americans did not want the President's videotape released. He responded, "I don't care. It will be released." Democracy has ended in the United States.

Jennifer Cartland,
 Chicago.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Bill und Hill

Profile of the Schröders, Europe's first couple?
By Denis Staunton

WHEN GERHARD SCHRÖDER married for the fourth time earlier this year, the wedding party included tycoons and television stars. His most senior colleagues in Germany's Social Democratic Party, however, were nowhere to be seen. Those who know Schröder, who hopes to become Chancellor Helmut Kohl of a record fifth term in office at next Sunday's federal election, were not surprised by his guest list. Like Tony Blair and Bill Clinton before him, Schröder is wooing voters on a non-ideological programme and putting as much distance as possible between himself and his party.

Schröder relishes the frequent comparisons made between himself and Blair as modernisers who made the centre-left electable after long periods of conservative government. But, though he is probably loathe to admit it at present, he has more in common with Clinton, not only on account of his weakness for women and fondness for fine Havana cigars, but because he is driven by a relentless ambition rooted in an impoverished childhood. Schröder has also twisted and turned on policy issues so many times that even his closest associates are unsure of what he really stands for.

What nobody doubts is that he represents the best chance for a Social Democrat-led government since Kohl came to power 16 years ago. He has not been shy of making his ambitions clear. Not long after he entered the Bundestag in 1980, Schröder was coming home after a night of drinking in Bonn when he passed the chancellery. Ranting the gates violently, he roared: "I want to get in there."

But he admitted in his memoirs that he felt a lust for power much earlier, when he was a 14-year-old

sales assistant in a general store in the northern town of Lemgo. "Power fascinated me from the moment that I stood behind a counter as an apprentice, with no educational qualifications and no prospects. I wanted to get out of there, to make something happen," he recalled.

Gerhard Schröder was born in April 1944, just three days before his father died fighting for "Führer, Volk und Vaterland" in Romania. His mother Erika, who is now 84, rose at five each morning to work as a cleaner, leaving the young Gerhard to take care of his sisters and to deal with the bailiffs who regularly called at the door. "We lived for a long time on social security. That shapes you. It also makes you sensitive. Whenever this issue comes on the agenda, I immediately remember these times," he said.

In the evenings, after work in the shop, Schröder went to school and completed his Abitur, the equivalent of A-levels, in 1966 — at the age of 22. He opted to study law and while still a student, married his childhood sweetheart, Eva Schubach. The marriage lasted just three years, not least because Schröder's growing interest in politics was occupying most of his time. In 1972, he married a student activist, Anne Taschenmacher, whom he had met at a rally of the Young Social Democrats, or Jusos.

By the time Schröder became leader of the Jusos in 1978, he had a reputation as a left-winger who had defended former terrorists and opposed the stationing of U.S. nuclear missiles in Germany. But he made his peace with the Social Democratic Party leadership in time to win a nomination for a Bundestag seat in 1980. It was during this campaign that he met Hiltrud Marion Hampel, a 31-year-old political scientist who became his third wife and with whom he formed a working partnership unique in Germany.

As the Social Democrats lost one federal election

after another, Schröder focused his ambitions on becoming prime minister of his home state, Lower Saxony. When he succeeded, in 1990, it was at the head of a coalition with the environmentalist Greens — an arrangement that was almost untested at the time.

Schröder had shed many of his left-wing views by the time he came into office but power itself changed him too, as the conservative newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine noted: "Before the eyes of the public, Schröder has undergone an astonishing personality change. The wounded aggressiveness of the opposition leader has become relaxed joviality, the stilted wish to impress has been replaced by the cool, governing style of an unassailable office holder."

Hiltrud, known as Hillu, was among his most valuable assets, providing a caring, environmentally aware counterbalance to his own robust, pragmatic image. They were the first political couple in Germany's history to court the media and to present themselves as celebrities, moving in ever more exalted company. Schröder began to spend less time with party activists and more with business leaders such as Volkswagen Chairman Ferdinand Piech.

He also began to espouse new, business-friendly politics and abandoned much that remained of his left-wing ideological baggage, including his opposition to changes in Germany's policy towards asylum seekers. Even Hiltrud was shocked by this: "I was annoyed by the brazen way he presented his U-turn. He met two ladies at tennis who complained that their gym hall was full of refugees and they couldn't shower. 'Then I knew we had a problem,' Gerhard said. Schröder's flirtation with the rich reached its climax in February 1996 when he and Hiltrud attended the Opera Ball in Vienna, along with Piech and his wife, and a local paper published a photo-



Illustration by Paul Hamlyn

graph of them — the men in white tie and tails and the women in expensive formal dresses, sitting in Piech's DM28,000 box. The ball not only banished any remaining doubts about where Schröder's political heart lay: it was also the last waltz for himself and Hillu. A few weeks earlier, Schröder had met a 31-year-old journalist called Doris Kopf and the couple were pictured flirting during a visit to Norway.

When Schröder discovered that the press were about to break with the story, he drove home to his wife and told her what had happened. It was approaching midnight but Hiltrud insisted that he leave the house immediately. "He didn't want to take a taxi into Hanover with all his things so I drove him there. It was the last service I did him," Hiltrud recalled.

The fourth Mrs. Schröder declines to make any political comments in public but she has been advising the candidate on how to dress and, through her friends in the media, helping him to maintain his already friendly relations with the press. Schröder has given up alcohol and his beloved Havana cigars until the results come in next Sunday. Opinion polls continue to predict that he will become the first Social Democrat to govern Germany since Helmut Schmidt.

Then will begin the real battle: with Doris at his side, he will go head to head with Tony and Cherie for the title of Europe's first couple.

— The Observer

World

Heroin oblivion between Karachi bus stops

By Zahid Hussain
Reuters

DEATH AND oblivion through heroin overdose are less than a bus ride away in Karachi.

The Pakistani port city is one of the world's main entrepôts in an international drug trafficking network, but local users are increasing alarmingly.

The one kilometre between the city's two main bus terminuses at Saddar and Burns Road is lined with the casualties of Pakistan's dependency on the drug trade, which underpins a tottering economy.

Every day thousands of commuters hurry along sidewalks lined with rows of addicts going nowhere.

The users are hunched over a heated spoon or silver foil, sucking in the heroin smoke, or injecting a solution of heroin, water and lemon juice into their arms and legs. Some lie in drug-induced comas. Some will never wake up.

Conversation with addicts, most of whom are labourers or engaged in menial work, never goes very far, and always comes back to one thing — their demand for money.

Officials say Pakistan has more than two million heroin addicts in a population of more than 130 million people.

"Proportionate wise, this figure is very alarming," Tariq Aziz, secretary of the Narcotics Control Division, told Reuters from Islamabad.

"Pakistan now shares almost 25 per cent of the eight million addicts around the world," he added.

People seeking to escape the harsh realities of life in a country where the annual per capita income is around \$400 are switching away from softer drugs.

The rich in this Islamic country may have access to liquor, but not its poor masses and the most common recreational drug of choice is hashish, which is illegal but accepted.

Pakistan has bowed to international pressure to stamp out poppy cultivation, which yields the opium resin from which heroin is derived, but an explosion of production from neighbouring Afghanistan, to finance a civil war, has kept the traffickers in business.

Aziz said heroin production in Pakistan fell dramatically to around 28 tonnes in fiscal 1997/98

(July-June) from 800 tonnes 20 years ago.

"Pakistan itself has become a net importer of heroin coming from Afghanistan where poppy cultivation has thrived during the past few years," Aziz said.

Heroin production has flourished in Afghanistan in the past three years as the fighters of the Islamic Taleban movement won control of most of the country.

Western diplomats reckon war-ravaged Afghanistan is on a par with Myanmar as the world's largest source of heroin.

Their narcotics agents estimate Afghanistan produced about 2,800 tonnes of opium in 1997 which was enough to make 280 tonnes of fine-quality heroin.

Aziz said Pakistan last year seized 8.5 million tonnes of opium, five tonnes of heroin, 10 tonnes of hashish and 1.5 tonnes of other drugs.

Figures for the first six months of this year show either the crop was smarter, or traffickers are finding new routes or getting bolder at smuggling, except for hashish.

By the end of June, anti-drug agents had confiscated 1.4 tonnes of opium, 1.1 tonnes of heroin, 27 tonnes of hashish and 1.5 tonnes of other drugs, he said.

Aziz said the government was helpless to do anything about heroin production in Afghanistan because of the war, but its efforts to suppress poppy cultivation in Pakistan were as strong as ever.

In April this year a 3,000-strong force of paramilitary troops equipped with rifles and 130mm cannons destroyed standing poppy crops spread over an area of more than 5,600 acres in Pakistan's northern tribal belt bordering Afghanistan.

Western drug enforcement officials praised the operation, but said the area under poppy cultivation was still much larger this year.

As October approaches, and sowing poppy in the mountain pastures of northern Pakistan begins, senior officials are trying to find a more convincing strategy to persuade farmers to find another crop.

Last April, an operation was launched after Western donor countries threatened to stop funding drug control projects.

The donors have pumped millions of dollars worth of aid into development projects aimed at keeping farmers away from poppy cultivation, but officials say the success had been marginal.

"We are trying this year to relaunch the development work in the affected areas to keep farmers from using their land for poppy," Aziz said.

While Pakistan seeks to uproot its home-grown poppy, the plant is popping up elsewhere. Fields of the red flower now carpet areas in Afghanistan close to Pakistan's western borders.

"Our survey shows expansion of poppy cultivation in new areas and that several new districts in Afghanistan are under poppy cultivation," said a Western drug official who asked not to be identified.

Landmines leave painful legacy in Vietnam

By Mary Binks
Reuters

LE DINH THANG and his younger brother were wandering home from school when they discovered a deadly but tantalising secret by the roadside.

Recent rain in this central province of Quang Tri had unearthed an American M79 grenade, and in the following days the boys returned time and again. They knew the object was dangerous but they wanted to see it explode.

Eventually the temptation became too great. Thang, 13, scooped up the grenade in his fingers and tried to throw it.

Minutes later villagers on the outskirts of the provincial capital Dong Ha were holding a plastic bowl to his stomach to prevent his insides spilling out.

To residents who witnessed the incident earlier this month, it was just another harsh reality of living virtually in a minefield in the dirt-poor province.

More than half the 560,000 people of Quang Tri — once the frontline of the Vietnam war — were born after the conflict ended in 1975.

But decades later they suffer the legacy of a war that has littered the country's soil with an estimated millions of landmines and unexploded ordnance.

Quang Tri straddles the 17th parallel, which divided the country into North and South before reunification. As a result it became one of the war's bloodiest battlegrounds.

In 1972 thousands of tonnes of bombs, artillery shells and chemical defoliants rained down on the province as U.S.-backed forces attempted to repel the southward advance of North Vietnamese troops.

For 31 days the province was bombarded by 40 specially assigned B-52s, each carrying 30 tonnes of bombs.

By the war's end the landscape appeared lunar, pock-marked by bomb craters and sown with shrapnel.

De-mining was a luxury the province could not afford.

Poverty forced people to till the land despite the danger, and the consequences were all too visible.

The debris of war wreaked death and disability and victims were not just farmers and their children.

In a province where more than half the people live below the poverty line, many have foraged for leftover bombs to sell as scrap metal that fetches little more than 10 cents a kilogramme after dealers have removed the explosives.

When Thang was seriously injured by the grenade, he was 300 yards from a group of 16 American volunteers only days away from opening Vietnam's first landmine education centre.

Tim Rasmussen, a former helicopter pilot who had been stationed at Quang Tri in 1972, was on his feet and out the door the instant he heard the blast.

"I knew that sound the moment I heard it, and inside I knew what had happened," he told Reuters.

It was a dark moment for Rasmussen, a man who had returned to Vietnam for the first time to confront his past. What he found was the war wasn't over for everyone.

"We put these mines here and I think it's our obligation to come back, to educate, and be part of removing them," he said.

Rasmussen and the other American volunteers are part of PeaceTrees Vietnam, an organisation that has helped the Vietnamese military clear about 18 hectares of land and plant trees where there were once landmines and mortars.

The group opened its landmines education centre on the outskirts of Dong Ha on September 18. They hope to educate local people, particularly children, on the dangers of landmines and unexploded ordnance.

"Obviously the most important thing is to get the mines and bombs out of the ground, remove the problem," says director Martha Hathaway. "But until we can do that, education is the only thing that's going to help stem the injuries that are occurring now almost on a weekly basis."

PeaceTrees Vietnam was founded by Jerilyn Brusseau and her late husband Danuan Parry. The couple had worked for reconciliation in many of the world's war zones.

But it was a personal connection that brought Brusseau to Vietnam. She lost her brother Danny to the Vietnam war. A 21-year-old helicopter pilot, he was shot down 19 days after he began his tour of duty.

"I knew in some way, somehow there would be a time when I could be part of when Americans and Vietnamese could come together and extend our hands in friendship and say let's create a new legacy for our children and our children's children," said Brusseau.

In the days before the American volunteers opened their landmine education centre, they gathered at Quang Tri's war cemetery — the second biggest in the country.

There, they placed stems of burning incense at the graves of men their countrymen fought. They lingered in silence to read names etched into endless rows of pallid grey headstones.

"For us it's so much more than just the landmine issue," said Hathaway, who was too young to remember the conflict.

"It's about working through some of the emotional wounds that we are carrying as American citizens because of the war." It may be 23 years since that war ended, but at what was once the frontline, generations on both sides are still fighting to overcome the legacy of a conflict they never knew.

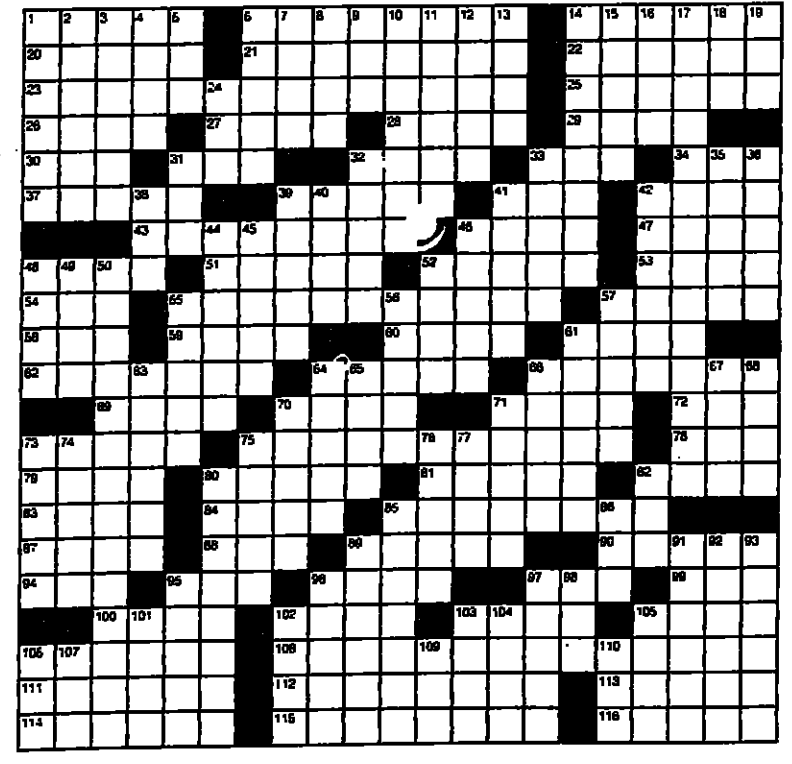


Le Dinh Thang after the accident. More than 20 years after the war ended in 1975 people still suffer its legacy with millions of landmines and other unexploded ordnance littering the land (Reuters photo)

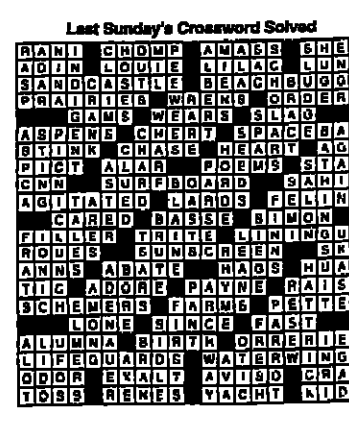
The Saturday Crossword

IN THE BAG
By Bill Swain, New Port Richey, Florida

- ACROSS
- 1 French subway
 - 6 Fix up furniture
 - 14 Hawklike?
 - 20 River's end, often
 - 21 Texas city
 - 22 Overnight flight
 - 23 Army Tan novel about golf?
 - 25 Stunt over
 - 26 Tiny bit
 - 27 Otherwise
 - 28 "Les Misérables" writer
 - 29 Metallic sound
 - 30 Churchill's gesture
 - 31 Farm enclosure
 - 32 Antarctic
 - 33 Feline
 - 34 Squinty catch
 - 37 Misprint
 - 38 Hackneyed
 - 41 Black goo
 - 42 Vague amount
 - 43 Pilot's perch
 - 46 Father
 - 47 Andes resident
 - 48 Transmitted
 - 51 Sealie of
 - 52 To come
 - 53 Easily imposed upon
 - 54 Hot diamonds
 - 55 Pave time on a practice green?
 - 57 Clamps
 - 58 Rainbow shape
 - 59 Individuals
 - 60 Soggy, unappetizing food
 - 61 Part to play
 - 62 Arctic boots
 - 64 Bamboo stems
- DOWN
- 1 Cause
 - 2 Parrot
 - 3 Wobble
 - 4 Hindu ruler
 - 5 Lennon's widow
 - 6 Came from behind
 - 7 Flightless bird
 - 8 Turn toward
 - 9 Inflame
 - 10 "The Graduate" director
 - 11 Threat badly
 - 12 Punctures
 - 13 Vagabond
 - 14 Ready
 - 15 Used used candles
 - 16 Norse Zeus
 - 17 Squeeze into a golf cart?
 - 18 Gab's agreement
 - 19 Scale notes



- 55 Subly
- 56 Nixon V.P.
- 57 Citizen with a voice
- 61 Revolutionary rider
- 63 Shaving foam
- 64 blunche
- 65 Pub fare
- 66 Vocal enthusiast
- 67 Period after Mardi
- 68 Brief times: abbr.
- 69 Rapinmand
- 70 In the past
- 73 Burdens
- 74 Soothe
- 75 Messer
- 76 Pulls behind
- 77 Speed along
- 80 Superlatively wise
- 82 Consumed
- 85 City in France or
- New Jersey
- 86 Station, to friends
- 89 Regional dialect
- 91 Show up
- 92 Piloted a glider
- 93 Family of the 10th
- 95 Conrad, the poet
- 96 Physiologist Enrico
- 97 Rose and Rocelle
- 98 Gray shade
- 101 Sleeper spy
- 102 Contended
- 103 Cotton separators
- 105 From a distance
- 106 Scarf like a snake?
- 107 Stink up
- 109 Red or yellow, e.g.
- 110 Ploie



Jordan says social plans to fight rising poverty

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Jordan plans to forge ahead with multi-million dollar social safety net programmes to combat escalating poverty compounded by tough IMF-directed economic policies, officials and economists said Thursday.

Social Development Minister Mohammad Khair Mamsar told Reuters in an recent interview that the programmes, begun this year, should offset the impact of free market reforms on the country's growing poor.

"Poverty will not increase because our programmes and projects are a safety valve to ensure poverty is not transformed into a source of social or political problems," Mamsar said.

Since last year, the government has been working along with major donors and the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and World Bank on an ambitious 10-year social safety net programme.

It has secured foreign aid for an initial three-year phase totalling JD178 million (\$250 million) to be spent on improving infra-

structure in poorer areas, micro-finance and training to create a better investment climate for more jobs.

Mamsar said economic reforms had a negative impact on the poorly paid and even the middle classes, which led to "a rise in unemployment which has led to poverty."

This was despite the overall positive impact of the reforms on the economy by "stabilising the dinar and enhancing our credibility with foreign donors," the minister said.

To combat poverty, officials are also tightening regulations on foreign labourers and in services and trades which now depend on imported labour.

Officials want to reduce the number of illegal Arab labourers, currently estimated at around 400,000, mostly Egyptians employed without work permits. Iraqis and Syrians also make up a large number of foreign workers.

Jordanians say the foreign labour force must be reduced to help absorb an estimated 200,000 unemployed locals and find room for over 80,000 annual entrants to the job market.

World Bank economists say Jordan needs economic growth rate of around seven per cent a year to offset population growth of 3.5 per cent and create jobs. But for the last two years economic growth has failed to keep up with population growth.

Worsening the problem is the young demographic structure of Jordan's 4.6 million population of whom over 40 per cent are younger than 14, social workers and economists say.

Officials say worrying indicators of rising poverty may further slow the already stalled structural reforms as the new cabinet of Prime Minister Fayez Al Tarawneh will have to act more cautiously than his predecessors to avoid a social backlash.

Civil unrest after a major 1989 crisis and similar troubles in the impoverished south in 1996 after IMF-approved steps to end bread subsidies still weigh heavily on decision-makers.

Mamsar said unpublished figures showed a sharp rise in poverty over the last 10 years as segments of the traditionally cushioned middle class slipped closer towards the poverty line.

People living in abject poverty, defined as families which contain no salary-earners and are entirely dependent on modest state handouts, soared to 11 per cent from 1.5 per cent in 1986-1987. Absolute poverty, defined as people who are partly dependent on the handouts, rose to 26 per cent from a range between 13 to 14 per cent,

Mamsar said.

Mamsar said specially funded programmes in the government's social safety net plans aim to halt the fall of middle class households into poverty. He said this segment of impoverished middle classes stood at 10 to 15 per cent of the population.

Mamsar said over JD140 million were spent last year by non-governmental and official funds to help curb poverty, but they remained stop-gap solutions without tackling the deeper causes of poverty.

The latest studies also indicate spiralling poverty in Jordan's major urban centres, including Amman where the heaviest population concentration exists in the poorer Palestinian refugee camps, Mamsar added.

Egypt, Jordan test first link in proposed Mideast power grid

CAIRO (AP) — When someone switches on the TV in Jordan these days, the image on the screen may be powered by electricity generated in Egypt.

The two countries have linked their power systems as the first step toward a proposed electricity grid extending east to the Gulf and west to Morocco — and even Europe.

The Egypt-Jordan link is being tested now and should begin commercial operation in October. The power is carried by cables that are lifted over the

Suez Canal by 225-metre towers, then run along the floor of the Gulf of Aqaba between the two nations.

A link between Jordan and Syria is expected to be finished next year, and one between Syria and Turkey is scheduled for completion in 2000.

As almost always in the Middle East, the beginning step was a long time coming. And the grander plan for the entire region is still held up by war and politics. Iraq's system is too damaged to join the system; Israel isn't welcome for now.

Jordanian and Egyptian officials say their link alone will mean steadier electricity and cost savings since they will be able to trade power during peak hours of consumption.

"Down the line, this will make electricity cheaper for consumers," said Waddah Naboulsi, general director of the Arab Union of Producers, Transporters and Distributors of Electricity, a regional group.

The Egypt-Jordan link should save Jordan alone

(Continued on page 9)

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NGN	Prices as at 25/09/99 16:15
US Dollar	-	1.6726	0.5878	1.3808	156.40	1.6112	1686.20	1.8877	5.8129
DE Mark	0.5979	-	0.3511	0.8243	80.80	0.9031	967.84	1.1276	3.3630
GB Sterling	1.7012	2.8487	-	2.3474	230.81	2.5709	2813.96	3.2111	9.5828
CH Franc	0.7242	1.2122	0.4254	-	98.14	1.0535	1197.50	138.70	4.0865
JP Yen	0.0074	1.2353	0.4338	1.0194	-	1.1160	12.22	138.30	4.1442
CA Dollar	0.6817	1.2816	0.4225	1.0566	1.12	-	1270.80	1.4581	4.3286
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0110	0.3551	0.8534	1223.54	0.9133	-	11.40	3.2910
NL Guilder	0.5297	88.63	0.3113	73.16	71.72	0.8907	876.58	-	2.8730
FR Franc	0.1782	0.2581	0.1047	24.5981	24.10	0.2683	33.62	33.6200	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7090	3.7502	0.3770	3.6402	0.3032	3.6726	1511.00	3.4080
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	-	5.2894	0.5317	5.1343	0.4276	5.1800	2131.17	4.8025
Saudi Riyal	0.2667	0.1891	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0808	0.98	402.91	0.3080
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8907	9.9480	-	9.66	0.8043	9.74	4008.17	9.0323
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1948	1.0302	1.0302	-	0.0833	1.01	415.09	0.3854
Kuwait Dinar	3.2982	2.3384	12.3687	1.2433	12.01	-	12.11	4883.51	0.3854
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1931	1.0211	1.0206	0.9912	0.0828	-	411.45	0.3271
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4692	2.4819	0.2495	2.4091	0.2007	2.4306	-	2.2635
Egyptian	0.2537	0.2082	1.1014	0.1107	1.0691	0.0890	1.0756	443.76	-

Energy					Mid-East Currencies				
Oil	Last	revised	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	
Brent	0.00	0.00	SA Riyal	0.2987	0.4462	0.16674	0.36846	36.1129	
W. Texas	15.99	15.95	AE Dirham	0.2723	0.45866	0.1601	0.37628	36.8789	
Bonny	0.00	0.00	KW Dinar	3.2982	5.81875	1.33911	4.55789	448.139	
Dubai	14.23	13.87	BH Dinar	0.3770	4.43853	1.55982	3.56889	388.195	
UL Gas	139.00	138.00	CY Pound	2.013	3.3701	1.1835	2.7816	272.76	

Metal Prices			Libor Fixing			
Metal	Bid	Offer	Period	1 - 3 Months	6 - 12 Months	1 - 5 Years
Gold (oz's)	296.1	296.6	USD	5.3867	6.3125	6.2500
Silver (oz's)	5.19	5.22	GBP	7.4378	7.3789	7.2800
Platinum (oz's)	357	359	JPY	0.4433	0.4414	0.4308
AL (3 Months)	1353	1355	DEM	3.4688	3.5000	3.5825
CU (3 Months)	1669	1673	FRF	1.3750	1.4648	1.5250
Zinc (3 Months)	997	998	CHF	3.5000	3.5313	3.5723
Lead (3 Months)	828	829	ITL	4.9890	4.7990	4.3250
NI (3 Months)	4150	4170				

Energy			JOD Cross Rates		
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Currency	Buy	Sell
Coffee (c/bs)	104.33	Spot	US Dollar	0.708	0.710
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1940	Spot	GB Sterling	1.1886	1.1958
Sugar (\$/ton)	213.1	Spot	DE Mark	0.4202	0.4223
Wheat (\$/ton)	103	Spot	CH Franc	0.6077	0.6102
Soya (c/bs)	25.39	Spot	FR Franc	0.1264	0.128
Tea (c/bs/kg)	126	Spot	JP Yen	0.9181	0.9207
Barley (\$/bsh)	0	Spot	NL Guilder	0.3726	0.3748
Rice (\$/ton)	415	Spot	IT Lira	0.4281	0.4272

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

BEAUTY IS NOT CREATED BY NATURE IT IS CREATED BY US

DAJANI Jewellers

Amman Forum Hotel Shops. Phone: 5527118 Amman

DELI NOW OPEN!!!

German Bread

[black bread, buns, loafs, pretzels and much more baked fresh daily]

Sausages and Hams

at the Bayerischer Hof Deli

available for our customers starting today
...as for our restaurant, we will be able to receive customers in the coming week...

Sweifeh, Al Hamra Street, [same street as Boston Fried Chicken] or phone us at 079-23760

SALE 50%

on winter & Summer Collections

Only one week

Calvin Klein Jeans

Jet Set - Abdoun Circle - Raf'at Center

Tel: 5928116

Syria raises its IFC share, to increase IMF quota

DAMASCUS (R) — Syria has increased its share in the capital of the International Finance Corporation (IFC) by 122,000 shares valued at \$122,000, economic sources have said.

They said that according to the increase, adopted by a presidential decree, Syria's share now becomes 194,000 shares.

The sources said also that Syria was planning to increase its share in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by 83.7 million Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) as of January 1999.

They said that the increase would put Syria's IMF share at 293.6 million SDRs from 209.9 million.

The sources said the plan to increase Syria's share at the IMF would be in compliance with a decision adopted on Jan. 30 by the IMF's board of governors to increase the IMF's capital to 212 billion SDRs from 146 billion.

They said the increase would allow Syria to get larger loans and promote its voting status at the fund.

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

TMSPuzzles@aol.com

ACROSS

- 1 Fish count
- 6 Dutch pottery
- 11 Feline
- 14 Cacophonously
- 15 Ms. Rogers St. Johns
- 16 Auburn U's state
- 17 Chipped in chips
- 19 Curry or Conway
- 20 St. Louis bridge
- 21 Prey of 11A
- 22 "Ich ... Dich" (I love you)
- 24 Siamese sounds
- 26 Feline of ads
- 27 Broccoli segments
- 30 7-time batting champ
- 31 Shrimp in SoHo
- 32 Timely benefits
- 34 Aie starter?
- 37 Train units
- 38 Cartoon feline
- 39 Kittenish
- 40 City
- 41 Sit on the fence
- 42 Valetta's nation
- 43 Fur covered
- 45 Red sauce
- 46 Vonnegut book, "Cat's"
- 48 Neutral vowel sound
- 50 Was fond of
- 51 N.Y. stadium
- 52 Unenthusiastic
- 56 The Greatest
- 57 Disaster
- 60 Moist
- 61 Lucine of the Mel
- 62 Iowa commune
- 63 Concordia, e.g.
- 64 Woods on the golf course
- 65 Dislike categorically

DOWN

- 1 Coffee shop
- 2 Environs
- 3 "Sweeney ..."
- 4 Dupes
- 5 Letters for the queen
- 6 Capital of Senegal
- 7 Film cuts
- 8 Permits
- 9 Airplane ride: abbr.
- 10 Rance and Liz
- 11 Shri! cries
- 12 Mystery story?
- 13 Domesticates
- 18 Ships up
- 23 Fury
- 25 Coffee server
- 26 Tailless feline
- 27 Source for a feline abbr.
- 28 Bayswater baby buggy
- 29 Jazz singer of note
- 30 Coconut fiber
- 32 Girls in a group
- 33 Spanish cheer
- 35 Two Latin words before Brute
- 36 Harvest
- 38 Token value
- 39 Underground cemetery
- 41 Kind of strike
- 42 Gaping mouth
- 44 Fruit drink
- 45 Casual talk
- 46 Feline weapons
- 47 Stirs up
- 48 Portion
- 49 Chavez or Romero
- 51 Male deer
- 53 Colorful fish
- 54 Cry of distress
- 55 Regan's father
- 58 "Bel"
- 59 Brit. school for painters

Monday's Puzzle Solved

SPAR HAIIRS SCAM
ARLO ALLOT POGO
PEACHMELBA AFAR
SPIKE SERB FIN
ARA SCREENS
PASSPORT HOPE
ECHO LIAM NICHE
CHOCOLATEECLAIR
SERIF SELF OKRA
TATS REFUGEES
TABLETS RESL
EAR NUMB NOSES
TREE PIEALAMODE
ROAD ITALY IDEA
ANDS DENSE TAINS

©1999 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

Peanuts

HOW SHOULD I CHEER FOR YOUR TEAM TODAY, CHARLES?

SHOULD I YELL "GO, REDS!" OR "GO, BLUES!" OR "GO, GREENS!" OR WHAT?

I DON'T KNOW, RERUN, YELL ANYTHING YOU WANT..

GO, T-SHIRTS!

Andy Capp

OFF!

THAT'S WAS NOTHING MORE WITH THAT TACKLE, HATE TO READ THE RULE BOOK!

HAPPY YOU DON'T HATE TO READ THE RULE BOOK!

WHAT YOU DON'T HATE TO READ THE RULE BOOK!

SHADAP!

Mutt'n' Jeff

HELLO, MUTT! DID YOU HAVE ANY LUCK WITH JEANETTE YESTERDAY?

YOU FOOL! NOW YOU'VE DONE IT! MY WIFE DOESN'T LIKE ME TO BET ON HORSES!

OH, I'M SORRY IF I MISSED YOUR WIFE, MUTT. JEANETTE ISN'T A HORSE, YOU KNOW.

SHE'S A CHORUS GIRL!

THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen

"Thank you for interrupting our dinner to sell us something. Our machine has recorded your number and it will return your call at 3:00 A.M."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Arington

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FLAUW

GROOF

BLOHED

BUESAD

Answer here: THE

Yesterday's Jumbles: GLORY CRANK NICETY QUARRY

Answer: How the busy worker liked his eggs in the morning — QUICKLY

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Head of Customs Department explains issues relating to production inputs and sales tax

There is no link between exempting production inputs from customs duties and the regulations that widened the base of establishments required to pay sales tax. Customs Department Director General Nazmi Abdullah told industrialists and businessmen on Thursday. Abdullah said the subject of widening the base was prior to the exemption from customs but a decision on it was delayed until a study was done on compensating the treasury as a result of the exemptions.

The customs chief said the study on exempting production inputs from customs is ready and he expected the exemption decision to be issued soon. Abdullah explained that 60 per cent of production inputs are subject to customs duties ranging between zero to ten per cent. "These rates are either considered as additional tax or import fees or both."

Abdullah outlined the reasons behind widening the base of businesses required to pay sales tax pointing out that, primarily, the objective is to achieve a balance between various levels of producers and providers of services. "This would spread a climate of fair competition," he said.

Another reason is to address the complaints of taxpayers who are under the umbrella of the sales tax only because their sales volume are slightly higher than the minimum level required for paying the tax. Noting that the taxpayers at the minimum level could lose part of their sales to those who are not registered taxpayers, Abdullah stressed that "widening the base would tighten the controls on the purchases and sales on a wider scale."

He added that the 10 per cent sales tax imposed on products and services subject to the tax "would not achieve the balance if it is not paid by those who are below the limit required for paying the tax." Abdullah said that is mandatory for all "new" taxpayers to register their businesses at the Ministry of Finance before the end of this end month.

The sales tax is now being imposed on each producer/manufacturer/provider of services whose annual sales exceed JD100,000. From Oct. 1, 1998 the sales tax will cover the producers/manufacturers whose sales exceed JD50,000 and the providers of services whose sales are over JD25,000. If a business operates as both producer and service provider the limit for paying the sales tax is JD25,000 per year.

The head of the Department of Customs emphasised that the sales tax law has given protection to the local industry through imposing the tax on the value of imports in addition to the customs duties. He said that the department will be holding periodic meetings to hear of any complaints from the public or those who deal with the department.

JTA Director General Halim Abu Rahmeh praised the decision to widen the base of taxpayers stressing that was a demand for a large number of industrialists and providers of services. "The decision will help achieve balance in sale prices," Abu Rahmeh said. (Al Ra'i + Al Aswaq + Al Arab Al Yawm).

Power link expected for commercial operation in October

(Continued from page 8)

\$7 million annually in its first year or two and much more in the future because it will reduce the need for new power plants, said Wa'il Sabri, executive manager of Jordanian Electrical Power Co.

Maher Abaza, Egyptian minister of electricity, said more than just cost is involved.

"These new connections will reduce the need for a strategic (generating) surplus and make our system safer" from blackouts, he said.

If power fails in one country, "it will be very easy to instantly send

power to the state in difficulty," he said.

Jordanian and Egyptian officials both said an important aspect of the project is that it should form the base for the far broader power grid.

The ambitious project started in 1988 with plans to include five nations — Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Turkey and Iraq. It was estimated making the links would cost \$450 million but lead to savings of \$2 billion a year by using excess generating capacity in each country at non-peak times.

Since then Israel has proposed links to two countries it has peace with,

Egypt and Jordan. And links are being discussed to the Arab states of the Gulf and across North Africa. Further extensions are envisioned to Sicily from Tunisia and to Spain from Morocco.

In the initial five-state system, each country is upgrading its own electrical infrastructure through loans from the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development. Each must meet a regional standard before connecting to the network.

But 10 years after the idea was conceived, the Jordan-Egypt link is the first in the originally planned five-nation grid.

Egypt and its North African neighbour, Libya, opened a line in June.


"Egypt exchanges electricity with Libya almost daily," said Mohammed Abdul Latif, chief engineer of the Egyptian Electricity Agency.

The delay in creating the larger regional system stems mostly from politics, including complications from the 1991 Gulf War and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Iraq is still under U.N. sanctions — imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait — that prohibit almost all trade with the country. Its electrical system also is still too crippled from the Gulf War to join the system.

Another potential partner in the system, Lebanon, is still rebuilding its electrical network from the devastating 1975-90 civil war.

Another question is linkage with Israel. Egypt and Jordan are both willing to eventually make that link but say it must wait for peace between the Jewish state and other Arab neighbours.

"Any link with Israel (now) would lead to Syria withdrawing from the project," said Abaza, the Egyptian electricity minister. "Without Syria the grid is incomplete, and there is no way of connecting to Turkey without passing through Syria."

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET															
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN															
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179															
ORGANIZED MARKET TRADING ACTIVITY FOR THE PERIOD (19/09/1998 - 23/09/1998)															
WEEKLY REPORT															
DURING THE LAST 3 WEEKS		COMPANY NAME	P/R	DTV	NO. OF CONTRACTS	NO. OF SHARES EXECUTED	VALUE TRADED JD	OPENING PRICE	HIGH	LOW	CLOSING PRICE	CHANGE	AVERAGE MARKET PRICE	NO. OF TRADING DAYS	
NIGH	LOW														
231.000	220.000	ARAB BANK	10.1	.90	153	3360	745170	223.00	223.00	219.50	221.00	-2.00	220.644	.028	5
1.670	1.640	JOR. NATIONAL BANK	12.2	4.29	27	35887	92140	1.65	1.63	1.63	1.63	-0.02	1.643	.006	5
3.000	3.000	CASINO AMMAN BANK	11.2	2.77	3	200	556	3.00	3.05	2.71	2.71	-0.29	2.780	.001	2
1.090	1.010	BANK OF JORDAN	-	0.00	9	16230	16486	1.02	1.02	1.00	1.01	-0.01	1.016	.077	4
1.080	.950	MID. EAST INV. INC.	61.7	0.00	7	45700	42315	.95	.95	.94	.94	-0.01	.948	.457	3
1.500	1.540	INDUSTRIAL DEV. INC.	11.1	6.56	10	10750	17035	1.59	1.59	1.58	1.58	-0.01	1.585	.045	4
3.140	2.930	THE HOUSING INV.	14.3	3.46	281	167560	480313	2.95	3.06	2.79	2.89	-0.06	2.967	.168	5
1.860	1.760	JOR. INVEST. BANK	-	0.00	25	4421	7078	1.80	1.80	1.78	1.79	-0.01	1.782	.029	3
.600	.580	JOR. GULF BANK	-	0.00	14	16350	9166	.58	.57	.56	.56	-0.02	.561	.082	5
2.970	2.920	JOR. JOR. INV. INC.	41.1	2.48	4	70500	70801	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	-	2.020	.173	1
1.760	1.710	JOR. INVEST. BANK	17.4	0.00	42	35895	61392	1.74	1.73	1.69	1.70	-0.04	1.710	.163	5
1.490	1.430	JOR. INV. FUND. BANK	39.8	3.38	19	16661	37648	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	-	1.480	.080	3
.770	.740	MUTUAL-AL. (BETHA)	3.5	0.00	8	2050	1494	.74	.73	.72	.72	-0.02	.729	.103	2
.720	.640	PRILLAGE. INV. INC.	1040.4	0.00	62	185115	126505	.70	.70	.67	.69	-0.01	.683	1.851	5
BANKS SECTOR															
644 574749 1663038 INDEX NUMBER : 289.19 CHANGE : +1.047															
1.380	1.380	JERUSALEM INSUR.	9.2	5.93	3	425	574	1.38	1.35	1.35	1.35	-0.03	1.351	.016	2
2.740	2.650	JOR. FREEM. INSUR.	7.3	9.51	14	11150	29658	2.65	2.75	2.55	2.63	-0.02	2.640	.507	4
2.150	2.150	PRILLAGE. INV. INC.	17.3	0.00	1	7000	6450	2.15	2.15	2.15	2.15	-	2.150	.150	1
1.990	1.940	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	9.8	0.00	7	6600	12873	1.98	1.99	1.94	1.99	-0.01	1.950	.250	3
INSURANCE SECTOR															
27 21175 49555 INDEX NUMBER : 126.41 CHANGE : +1.205															
1.530	1.480	JOR. ELECTRIC FUEL	9.5	5.65	138	91044	132684	1.49	1.49	1.43	1.44	-0.03	1.457	.455	5
2.360	1.930	IRAD. ELECTRICITY	11.3	5.46	1	100	182	1.93	1.83	1.83	1.83	-0.10	1.830	.003	1
1.950	1.950	VECLA. OILS. FUEL	6.0	6.15	2	357	696	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.95	-	1.950	.030	1
6.510	6.550	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	18.5	2.33	2	5400	24240	4.25	4.50	4.25	4.50	+0.15	4.489	.045	1
.940	.740	BATH. PORTFOLIO	29.5	0.00	31	12503	9366	.77	.76	.74	.74	-0.03	.749	.250	5
.490	.490	RAI. EXCH. INV.	14.3	0.00	5	1498	1065	.69	.73	.69	.73	-0.04	.711	.032	3
.300	.280	ARAB INTL. TRAD.	-	0.00	30	86981	24279	.28	.29	.27	.29	-0.01	.279	.258	4
1.120	1.090	MID. EAST HOTELS	209.0	0.00	8	16394	17867	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09	-	1.090	.299	3
2.010	1.940	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	9.7	2.05	38	22775	44410	1.96	1.96	1.94	1.95	-0.01	1.950	.112	5
.900	.890	SARSA EDUCATION	20.5	0.00	20	10000	8900	.89	.89	.89	.89	-	.890	.169	5
1.090	1.090	UNITED FOR FUND. INV.	5.0	9.73	25	7250	8163	1.15	1.14	1.12	1.13	-0.02	1.126	.145	5
.540	.540	UNITED LAND DEV.	-	0.00	1	200	102	.54	.51	.51	.51	-0.03	.510	.084	1
1.120	1.090	UNITED FOR FUND. INV.	1.4	5.84	5	21400	23514	1.11	1.10	1.09	1.10	-0.01	1.099	1.070	3
SERVICES SECTOR															
307 275922 295579 INDEX NUMBER : 104.19 CHANGE : +1.647															
1.970	1.930	JOR. CHEMIST FACT.	11.3	5.79	35	59523	114036	1.94	1.93	1.88	1.90	-0.04	1.916	.098	5
1.690	1.570	JOR. PHOTOGRAPH. KUSH	15.8	0.00	5	1846	2788	1.57	1.54	1.49	1.49	-0.08	1.510	.004	2
4.600	3.950	ARAB POTASH CO.	19.0	5.19	13	91455	354974	3.95	4.00	3.85	3.88	-0.10	3.903	.110	3
10.510	10.510	JOR. PETROLE. REFINERY	10.2	8.47	95	9371	96210	10.53	10.45	10.30	10.50	-0.03	10.525	.146	5
5.100	5.100	JORDAN TANNING	7.9	8.16	2	60	294	5.10	4.90	4.90	4.90	-0.20	4.900	.006	1
1.180	1.120	INDUSTRIAL COMMER.	66.8	0.00	14	1670	1877	1.14	1.13	1.11	1.12	-0.01	1.124	.933	4
6.950	5.500	JOR. WORTED MILLS	7.5	3.51	2	4000	34250	4.05	5.00	5.70	5.70	-0.35	5.700	.150	2
2.770	2.610	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	7.4	2.79	107	61068	164803	2.72	2.74	2.68	2.69	-0.03	2.699	.239	5
1.100	1.100	JOR. CHEMICAL IND.	4.9	8.93	13	2930	3303	1.15	1.14	1.12	1.12	-0.03	1.127	.059	5
2.750	2.750	JOR. PETROLE. CO.	10.29	0.00	1	300	810	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.70	-	2.700	.017	1
.910	.910	JOR. PAPER CO.	9.0	9.17	3	209	228	1.10	1.10	1.09	1.09	-0.01	1.091	.006	2
5.750	5.560	DAR ALDAMA. OF. INV.	6.5	6.51	33	17400	95562	5.58	5.51	5.38	5.38	-0.20	5.492	.290	5
1.750	1.700	ARAB ALUM. IND.	12.9	14.37	6	4900	8494	1.72	1.75	1.73	1.74	-0.02	1.733	.082	3
.420	.390	LIVERPOOL & PORTLEY	13.2	0.00	33	20950	8204	.60	.60	.59	.59	-0.01	.592	.635	4
3.550	3.200	GENERAL INVESTMENT	14.6	3.13	2	3000	9720	3.25	3.33	3.20	3.20	-0.05	3.243	.043	2
.810	.780	ARAB PAPER CO. IND.	0.15	0.00	1	150	116	.80	.77	.77	.77	-0.03	.773	.004	1
.430	.410	NATIONAL STEEL. IND.	-	0.00	19	11687	4416	.41	.39	.37	.39	-0.02	.378	.292	4
.370	.300	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	-	0.00	61	59325	18023	.33	.32	.30	.31	-0.02	.304	1.483	5
.370	.370	JOR. ROADMACH. IND.	-	0.00	22	12300	4406	.37	.37	.35	.35	-0.02	.358	.410	5
.970	.900	UNIT. CUPR. IND.	9.42	0.00	21	3700	5645	.92	.97	.94	.95	+0.03	.950	.247	5
.760	.700	WATZ. CARBON. MINE. MFG.	32.8	0.00	29	12850	9210	.72	.78	.70	.72	-0.08	.708	.186	6
.450	.380	JOR. SULPH. CO.	7.4	0.00	63	52800	20760	.41	.42	.39	.39	-0.02	.393	1.173	5
1.280	1.250	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	13.8	4.80	14	4186	5280	1.28	1.28	1.25	1.25	-0.03	1.261	.084	4
.500	.470	KANUN. INVEST.	-	0.00	6	3500	1590	.47	.44	.42	.43	-0.04	.443	.175	3
1.750	1.750	UNIT. WOOD. IND.	11.5	9.09	19	11360	7789	.76	.71	.66	.66	-0.04	.669	1.883	5
.530	.500	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	0.60	0.00	65	27400	12052	.52	.51	.48	.51	-0.03	.493	.349	3
1.260	1.240	MATL. CHEMICALS	8.7	8.06	2	1100	1764	1.26	1.24	1.24	1.24	-0.02	1.240	.015	2
.680	.600	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	8.9	15.87	35	44200	28058	.64	.64	.62	.63	-0.01	.635	.553	5
1.210	1.180	EL. RAY. READY WEAR	44.3	0.00	12	19550	23535	1.20	1.26	1.20	1.26	-0.03	1.204	.261	3
.750	.710	UNIT. WOOD. IND.	7.2	9.72	16	15140	15625	1.05	1.08	1.02	1.02	-0.03	1.046	1.262	5
1.050	.970	UNION. CHEM. & WED.	0.30	0.00	3	350	328	.95	.94	.93	.93	-0.02	.937	.007	2
.880	.770	JORDAN STEEL	9.5	8.24	30	38939	32503	.85	.87	.85	.85	-	.859	.260	5
.730	.640	MAT. ALUMINUM	33.7	0.00	69	45047	30606	.69	.69	.67	.68	-0.01	.679	.501	5
.580	.530	MID. EAST COMPLEX	9.8	0.00	11	13700	7450	.55	.55	.54	.54	-0.01	.544	.062	5
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR															
1082 896986 1342104 INDEX NUMBER : 77.78 CHANGE : +1.253															
GRAND TOTAL															
2080 176832 3350272 INDEX NUMBER : 173.65 CHANGE : +1.253															
NO. OF DAYS TRADED : 5															
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADING VOLUME : JD 670,055															
DAILY AVERAGE OF TRADING SHARES : 353,744															
DAILY AVERAGE OF CONTRACTS : 416															

Australia count on Olympic boost to World Cup bid

SYDNEY (AFP) — An Australian bid to hold the World Cup football finals could get a big boost from a successful Olympic soccer tournament, football officials here claimed Friday.

"You can guarantee FIFA will be looking at this tournament very carefully," Queensland Olympic Football chairman Ian Brusasco said.

"If it's successful it will be a great opportunity and the precursor for Australia's World Cup bid."

Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games official Trevor Doherty added: "FIFA were disappointed with some aspects of Atlanta so they'll be watching us carefully to ensure it's successful."

The 2000 Olympic soccer tournament will be the only one of 28 Olympic sports played outside Sydney, with venues in Brisbane, Melbourne, Canberra and Adelaide, but with the final being played in Sydney's 110,000 capacity Olympic Stadium.

Soccer Australia chairman David Hill said they were still very much in the running for making a bid for either the 2006 or 2010 World Cup.

England, Germany and South Africa are the only countries so far to have made official bids for the 2006 World Cup.

Hill said historically every second World Cup was held in Europe while in South Africa's favour was the fact the tournament had never been staged in Africa.

He said South Africa's organisers had pledged to support Australia's bid for 2006.

But the South Africans could not guarantee that support if they failed in 2006.

"There will be a World Cup in Australia, it's just a matter of when," Hill added.

Australian voters to decide on Queen opening Sydney Games

SYDNEY (AFP) — Olympics Minister Michael Knight said Friday the Australian people would decide whether Britain's Queen Elizabeth II would open the Sydney 2000 Games.

Knight said he preferred Australia to be a republic

by September 2000 and for the nation's first president to open the Games.

"But whether we're a republic or not is really in the hands of the people, not in the hands of the organising committee," he said.

Prime Minister John

Howard has said he would open the Olympics if he stayed in power after the October 3 elections, while opposition Leader Kim Beazley said earlier this week he would either leave the task to a new head of state of an Australian republic or make "other

arrangements".

The Olympic Charter says the head of state should open the Games but it is doubtful the International Olympic Committee would object to whomever the Australian government proposed.

Red Sox wrap up playoff berth

BOSTON (AFP) — The Boston Red Sox wrapped up their first postseason berth in three years Thursday with a 9-6 victory over Baltimore as Nomar Garciaparra belted a pair of solo homers and Scott Hatteberg matched a career high with four hits.

Boston, the American League wild-card team, clinched its third playoff berth of the decade and first since a three-game exit in the 1995 Divisional Round. The Red Sox also reached 90 wins for the first time since their last World Series appearance in 1918, when they went 95-66.

"What's important is that we're going into the playoffs with the notion that we haven't completed our job," Garciaparra said.

Boston likely will meet Cleveland when the playoffs begin next week. The Red Sox were beaten by the Indians in 1995, have not won a postseason game since 1986 and have not won a World Series since 1918.

Garciaparra smacked his 34th homer in the second inning off Orioles starter Sidney Ponson (8-9) to bring the Red Sox within 2-1 and added his second homer in the seventh off Pete Smith to extend Boston's lead to 9-5.

Greg Swindell pitched an inning and Dennis Eckersley allowed a homer by B.J. Surhoff in the eighth before

giving way to Tom Gordon, who struck out the side in the ninth for his major-league record 42nd consecutive save and league-leading 45th of the season.

Eckersley appeared in his 1,070th major league game, tying the major-league record for career appearances held by Hoyt Wilhelm.

Elsewhere in the American League, Aaron Sele won his 19th game and Ivan Rodriguez hit a two-run homer as the Texas Rangers clinched a tie for the AL West title with a 9-3 rout of the Seattle Mariners.

Texas played its fourth straight superb game to move within one game of its second AL West crown in three years. Coming off a three-game sweep of Anaheim that all but salted away the division, the Rangers have won their last four by a combined 34-6.

The Rangers lowered their magic number to one and can wrap up the division with a win Friday or an Anaheim loss. The Angels stayed mathematically alive with a 10-6 win in Oakland.

Sale (19-11) became the fifth pitcher in team history and second this season to win 19 or more games. Mac Suzuki (1-2) was torched for six runs and seven hits over just 1 1/3 innings.

In San Francisco, Rookie Russ Ortiz pitched five solid

innings and his first major-league home run was one of four by the San Francisco Giants, who drew within one game of the National League wild-card leaders with a 6-2 victory over the reeling Pittsburgh Pirates.

Barry Bonds, Rich Aurilia and red-hot Joe Carter also homered for the Giants, who just four days ago were all but out of the race. But four straight victories, coupled with two losses by the New York Mets and a split of a two-game series by the Chicago Cubs, have San Francisco just one game out with three to play.

The Giants, who end the season in Colorado, have added hope as the Mets and Cubs — both idle on Thursday — close the season on the road against division winners. The Mets are in Atlanta and the Cubs are in Houston.

In St. Louis, the race for the home run record remained deadlocked as Mark McGwire failed to homer in the Cardinals' 6-3 win over Montreal.

Remaining tied with the Cubs' Sammy Sosa for the all-time single-season home run record, McGwire went 1-for-3 but again failed to clear the fences since hitting his 65th against Milwaukee on Sunday.

The Greatest in town for Australia's Grand Final

SYDNEY (AFP) — Muhammad Ali, the world's most famous sportsman — past or present — made a regal entry to Australia on Friday.

The former three-times world heavyweight boxing champion was greeted by fans and media when he stepped off businessman Dick Pratt's private Gulfstream jet for his first visit to Australia for 19 years.

Ali, who wrestles with the debilitating Parkinson's disease, could only utter one word to his fans — "Hello".

His wife Lonnie spoke for the man himself who was invited to watch the final of the Australian rules football championship, one of the highlights of the Australian sporting calendar.

Lonnie said she and Ali were looking forward to the game because it was unlike anything they had seen before.

"Muhammad is not taking sides in this show," she said. "It will probably come down to whoever he is sitting with at the time and who they are cheering for."

He kissed girls, nursed a small boy, autographed boxing gloves and boxing magazines with his face on the cover, posed for photographs, shook hands and even shaped up to one young man in a mock boxing stance of his former glory days.

The 95,000 who will be at the Melbourne Cricket Ground on Saturday for the Grand Final between North Melbourne and Adelaide will get their chance to see "The Greatest" when he is driven around the ground in an open-top car.

He will be presented with the keys to the city by Lord Mayor Ivan Deveson before Saturday's game.



Britain's Greg Rusedski celebrates after beating India's Leander Paes in five sets during the first match of the Davis Cup at the Nottingham Tennis Centre (AFP photo)

Courier to sit out U.S.-Italy Davis Cup semi-final

MILWAUKEE, Wisconsin (AFP) — Former World No. 1 Jim Courier will be nothing more than a lucky charm this weekend when the United States faces Italy in the best-of-five Davis Cup semi-finals.

Courier, the hero of the Americans' opening-round victory over Russia, failed to make his way into captain Tom Gullikson's lineup.

He withdrew from last month's U.S. Open due to a "dead arm" and was reportedly to be considering retirement.

But he agreed to return to Davis Cup duty after Andre Agassi and Pete Sampras both made themselves unavailable.

Courier's inactivity and lack of match preparation, however, ultimately led to Gullikson's decision to go with Davis Cup rookie Jan-Michael Gambill and Davis Cup veteran Todd Martin in the singles.

"He hasn't had much match competition in quite a while," said Gullikson. "It was basically that issue of match toughness for sure."

Gambill will face Italy's Andrea Gaudenzi in the opening singles match and Martin will follow against Davide Sanguinetti on Friday at Milwaukee Arena.

Martin and Justin Gimelstob will team in doubles against Gaudenzi and Diego Nargiso on Saturday and the reverse singles will be held Sunday.

Courier, who rallied to defeat the big-hitting Marat Safin in the thrilling fifth and deciding match against Russia in April, was a surprise selection when the U.S. team was announced two weeks ago.

Courier's 15-8 lifetime mark in Davis Cup and the U.S. team's perfect 12-0 mark with him on the team

convinced Gullikson to set aside one of the four berths on the squad. However, it appears Courier will be the only one of the four not to see action this weekend.

"Jim is a great leader," said Gullikson. "He sets a good tone with his work ethic and his commitment and he is a great team guy. He loves being part of the team and the team — the young guys can learn a lot from him both on and off the court."

"I haven't gotten any matches under my belt since Cincinnati," explained Courier.

"We have had a talk about it. Jan-Michael has been playing. He played pretty well in the U.S. Open and has got a bit more match toughness than I do right now, so he is the guy we are going with. We have a lot of confidence in him and I will be on the bench hopefully pulling him through."

Gambill, a practice partner for the U.S. squad in this year's opening round and quarterfinals, has the tough task of drawing the opening match and the fifth — and potentially decisive — match on Sunday.

"I am just going to go out tomorrow and play my best tennis," said Gambill, downplaying the importance of the opening match.

"Whether it's the first or second match I don't think really matters to me that much. I'll just go out and play each point the best I can and do the best out there."

The 20-year-old Gambill is having his best season since turning professional in 1995. He reached his first tour semi-final in the Super Nine event at Indian Wells, California, and the quarterfinals at Scottsdale, Arizona, and San Jose, California.

Gambill reached the third

round at the U.S. Open, losing to Spain's Carlos Moya in five sets. After starting the year ranked 227th in the world, he has vaulted to his current No. 50.

Martin is 10-2 in Davis Cup singles and 2-3 in doubles. He teamed with Courier in doubles to seal the quarter-final win over Belgium.

Gimelstob, a former collegiate standout, has served as a practice partner for the U.S. team the last two years. This year, the 21-year-old New Jersey native won two Grand Slam mixed doubles titles with Venus Williams and won two men's doubles titles.

This will be the first time since 1993 that two U.S. players will make their Davis Cup debut in the same tie.

The selection of two newcomers came about when Sampras, Agassi and Michael Chang made it clear they would not compete.

Sampras, who has been critical of Davis Cup scheduling in the past, and Chang turned down the chance to compete.

Agassi, ranked eighth in the world and a Davis Cup stalwart, declared himself unavailable to play because of a scheduling conflict. His charity foundation's annual benefit takes place in Las Vegas on Saturday.

Aussies take lead in Davis Cup clash

TOWNSVILLE (AFP) — Australia's Jason Stoltenberg awoke from a first-set slumber to give Australia a 2-0 lead against Uzbekistan in their Davis Cup World Group qualifying tie here Friday.

Stoltenberg struggled for confidence and timing to lose two of his opening three service games against Vadim Kutsenko before finding his feet to win 7-5, 6-1, 6-0.

He fought back to reach 5-5 in the opening set before reeling off seven straight games against the 249th-ranked Kutsenko.

The Uzbek stopped, the not to win a game and make it 5-1 in the second, but Stoltenberg was in his stride and won another seven straight games to close the match.

Earlier World No. 2 Pat Rafter, in his first game since winning the U.S. Open, beat 254th-ranked Oleg Ogorodov 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 in front of a capacity 4,900 crowd at the Townsville Entertainment Centre.

The Queenslander was tested in the opening set by the strong backhand of Ogorodov, but with the first set under his belt, Rafter seemed to blow away the cobwebs from his two-week break and strove to victory.

In Saturday's doubles rubber, Todd Woodbridge and Mark Woodforde take on Ogorodov and Dmitri Tomashevich.

Camara takes Marseille into 2nd spot

PARIS (AFP) — Marseille went second in the French first division on Thursday following a tear-laden 2-0 win at Corsican side Bastia.

The winning goal came from Aboubacar Camara, who collapsed into floods of tears after finally scoring following a string of bad misses.

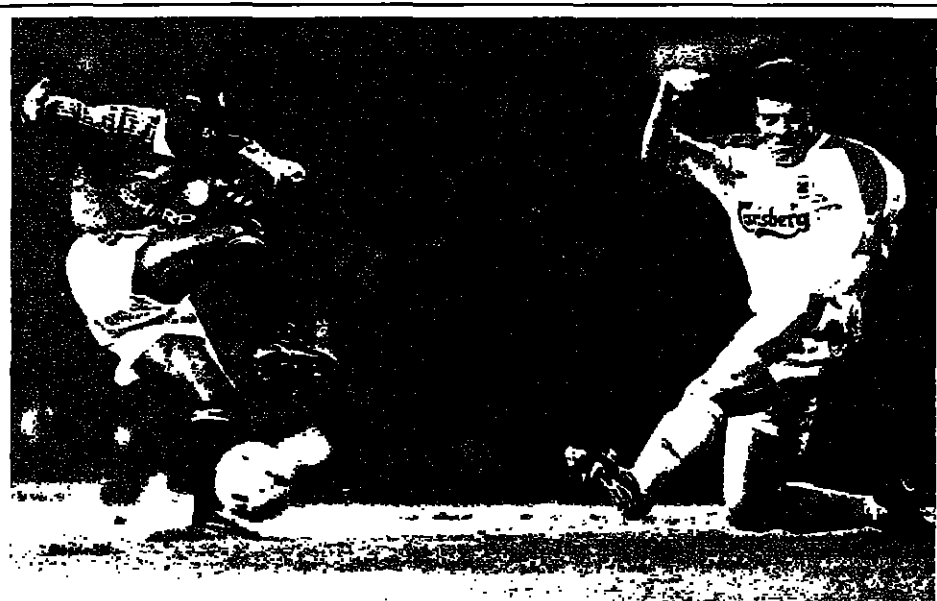
The much-criticised Guinean striker, struggling to remain in Marseille's star-laden line-up, missed twice when put through on his own with only the goalkeeper to beat but made certain with his third effort.

He fell to the ground with his head in his hands in relief after his 67th minute clincher and was substituted shortly afterwards, still crying with joy.

The first goal after 36 minutes came from French international Robert Pires. The midfielder ran into the area down the right channel and then beat the goalkeeper on the near post.

The win gave Marseille 15 points from seven games, one point behind Bordeaux who play Rennes on Friday.

In Thursday's other match, Auxerre and Toulouse drew 0-0.



Manchester United's Andy Cole (L) attempts to shoot past Liverpool's Stig Bjornebye (R), during their FA Carling Premiership match at the Old Trafford stadium which Manchester won by 2-0 goals (AFP photo)

TODAY AT	PHILADELPHIA '1'	PHILADELPHIA '2'	PLAZA	CONCORD	GALLERIA 1	GALLERIA 2	Islam Yanes Theatre
	John Travolta & Olivia Newton-John ... in GREASE Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Sophie Marceau ... in Leo Tolstoy's love story ANNA KARENINA Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Comedian Adel Imam ... in AL ZA'EEM Shows: 6:30, 9:30 Additional shows Thursday and Friday evenings at 12:30	CONCORD '1' NASSER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' UP CLOSE & PERSONAL Shows: 3:30, 5:30 only	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria ARMAGEDDON Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:45	ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria GREAT EXPECTATIONS Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45	Watch out for the new play

FIFA to ban Super League clubs — Blatter

ZURICH (AFP) — FIFA president Sepp Blatter warned on Friday that he would suspend any clubs who sign up for the proposed privately-backed Super League.

Blatter, speaking after an executive meeting of the world governing body, stressed that FIFA would take a tough line against any attempt to break up the "family of football".

A FIFA spokesman said later that any suspension, which FIFA would call on national soccer federations to impose, would prevent a team from playing in their national league or any continental cup competition.

The Super League, seen as a direct challenge to existing European competitions, has been proposed by Media Partners, a Milan-based consultancy.

They aim to replace the three official cup competitions run by European governing body UEFA with a midweek Super League of 36 teams and a Pro Cup with 96 clubs from 51 countries, starting in 2000-2001.

The main plank of the Super League proposal is to take competition ownership away from UEFA and hand it over to the teams involved.

The new competitions, according to Media Partners, would generate around two billion dollars a year in television rights over the first six years, compared to \$500 million a year from UEFA's Champions League, European Cup Winners Cup and UEFA Cup.

Clubs involved in break-away discussions include Juventus, AC Milan, Manchester United, Arsenal, Bayern Munich and Paris St Germain.

Kaiserslautern aim for revenge

COLOGNE (AFP) — German league champions Kaiserslautern get a chance for revenge when they face Bochum in the Bundesliga on Saturday.

Kaiserslautern face Bochum for the second time in five days after losing to them on penalties in the German Cup in midweek.

Coach Otto Rehhagel was criticised for the loss because he rested half a dozen key players.

An unknown from Bochum's amateur ranks, Sebastian Schindzielorz, scored the decisive penalty for his injury-hit side.

Used to playing in the fourth division, Schindzielorz has a good chance of playing against the champions again on Saturday as Bochum try to scratch together enough players.

Kaiserslautern are currently third on the table, five points behind leaders Bayern Munich, but already captain Ciriaco Sforza is demanding that new players be bought to bolster the side.

Uwe Rosler, who switched to Kaiserslautern from English second division club Manchester City in the off season, will miss this weekend's game because of a jarred back picked up on Tuesday evening.

Celebrating their best start in 30 years, second-placed 1860 Munich host Hertha Berlin on Saturday but are realistic about their chances of staying near the top — especially after they were booted out of the German Cup midweek by second division side Fortuna Dusseldorf.

Bayern Munich may be feeling dizzy from all their travel in the last two weeks. They have gone from a Champions League match in Denmark to opposite ends of Germany for another four Cup and league games in that time. On Saturday, they go back north to Werder Bremen.

The gruelling schedule has taken its toll and captain Thomas Helmer, Mario Basler and Alexander Zickler will all be missing.

Schalke and Bayer Leverkusen, who both exited from the Cup in midweek, meet on Saturday eager to restore some pride.

Schalke, in particular, have failed to impress this season and dissatisfaction is growing among the team with the style of Huub Stevens' coaching.

7th Arab Cup finals Jordan defeat Libya 2-1, aim for win over Qatar

S. Arabia beat Algeria as Sudan upset Morocco

By a Staff Reporter

JORDAN PLAY hosts Qatar Saturday in their second match at the 7th Arab Cup finals currently underway in Doha, Qatar, with 12 teams taking part.

The Kingdom's team will be aiming for an outright win as they seek to clinch the sole qualifying berth from Group 1 and move to the second round after they eliminated Libya 2-1 in their first match.

Qatar also have the same chance. They have one win in hand after their own 2-1 win over Libya in the tournament's opening match.

Meanwhile, Syria will be hoping to keep their chances alive when they meet Kuwait in Saturday's earlier match.

Kuwait's qualifying chances were bolstered after they eliminated titleholders Egypt over the weekend following a 4-1 win.

Egypt, and the rest of North African countries have entered their Olympic team rather than national teams in the competition.

On Friday, Saudi Arabia scored a convincing 3-0 win over Algeria while Sudan scored a major 2-1 upset over Morocco.

The Saudi lineup featured most stars of their World Cup team. For Sudan, their win was a first in their inaugural Arab Cup. They will next play the UAE who had lost 1-0 to Morocco.

Teams playing in the Sept. 22-Oct. 1 finals have been divided into four groups:

Group 1: Jordan, Libya, Qatar

Group 2: Egypt, Kuwait, Syria

Group 3: Morocco, the UAE, Sudan

Group 4: Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Lebanon

The top team in each group will qualify to the second round where the winners advance to the finals and the losers play for third and fourth places.

The Arab Soccer



Egypt's Ayman Ramadan (L) tries to stop Kuwait's Bachar Abdullah in Doha, during their 7th Arab Cup. Kuwait won 4-1 (AFP photo)

Federation will present cash awards to the top four teams: \$40,000 for the champion, \$30,000 for the runner up, and \$20,000 for the third and fourth-placed teams.

Jordan has taken part in all past six Arab Cups since the championship first kicked off in 1963. The Kingdom achieved the best result in the 5th Cup hosted in Amman where Jordan took fourth place.

The Kingdom's team has

played a total of 21 Arab Cup matches winning only three, drawing in three and losing 15 matches.

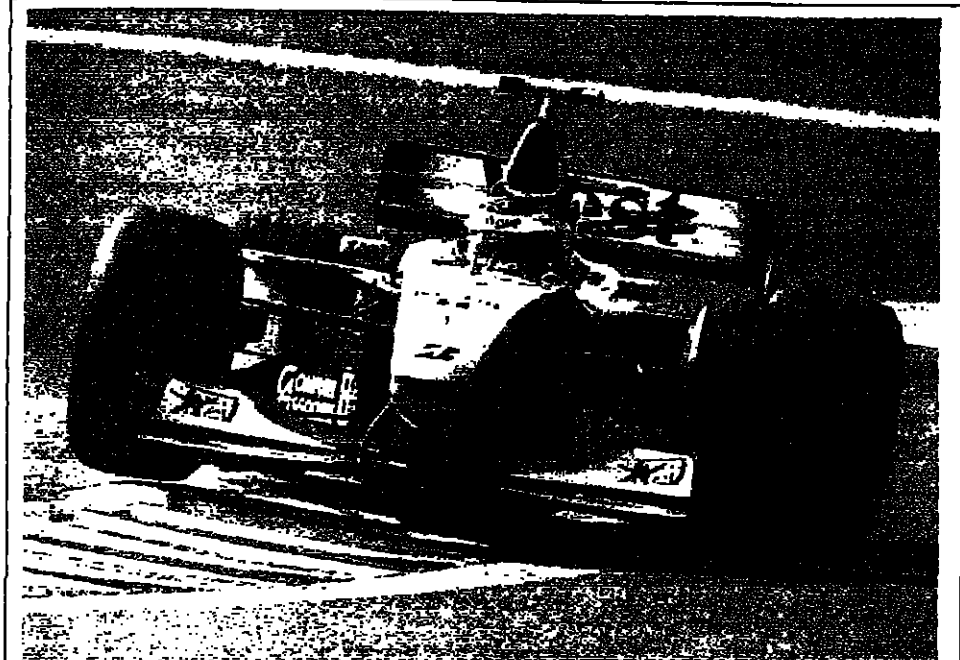
Throughout the past six Arab Cups, Jordan scored only 13 goals while allowing 51 in.

Israel are the four time titleholders. Tunisia and Egypt have won it once each, while Syria are three time runners-up.

Jordan had qualified to the Arab Cup finals after beating Lebanon 2-0, drawing

1-1 with Palestine, and losing to Syria 3-0 in the preliminaries held in Beirut, Lebanon.

The Jordanian team had training camps in Aqaba, Egypt, and Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, Premier League matches have been put on hold pending the return of the national team, while the Jordan Football Association Shield is currently underway with team lineups missing their national team players.



Finnish Formula One driver Mika Hakkinen of McLaren-Mercedes during the free practice before the Luxembourg Grand Prix on the Nurburgring racetrack on Friday. Hakkinen, level on 80 points with German Ferrari driver Michael Schumacher with just two races to go, clocked one minute 19.689 seconds, the fastest time of the session for Sunday's race. Schumacher timed 1:20.461 for fourth place, also behind Italian Fisichella and Canadian Villeneuve (AFP photo)

Princess Cup Tanasugarn beats Frazier to challenge Seles in semis

TOKYO (AFP) — Thai ace Tamarine Tanasugarn used a favourable wind to beat Amy Frazier on Friday and earn a semi-final berth against Monica Seles in the \$450,000 Princess Cup tennis tournament.

Tanasugarn, having played her previous two matches in windy conditions on outside courts, chalked up a 6-1, 6-3 win over the American who struggled with strong winds over the centre court.

In the semi-finals Saturday Tanasugarn will challenge defending champion Seles of the United States, who breezed past Julie Halard-Decugis of France 6-2, 6-1.

"It was very windy today and it was very difficult for both of us, so I just tried to hang in there and hit the ball into the court. I played safe today, not hitting a lot of unforced errors," said Tanasugarn, 21.

Frazier, who played her first two matches with the roof closed at the centre court due to rain, committed numerous errors in the first set and was one set and 0-2 down when she got used to the windy conditions.

Frazier hit a couple of service return winners to break the sixth game for 3-3, but it was too late for her to turn the tide as Tanasugarn took the following three close games in succession.

Tanasugarn lost her only previous meeting with Frazier in August.

"It's my first tournament that I've done pretty well in Japan. I was always here since juniors. I feel great. I just play my best and have fun and enjoy," said Tanasugarn, who also achieved a doubles semi-final berth with Elena Likhovtseva of Russia Thursday.

Seles hit three doubles faults to lose her service game in the seventh game of the first set. But she was never seriously in trouble in her 53-minute battle, having won this typhoon-season tournament four times before.

"It was so windy and swirling. My previous matches and my doubles match, I played indoors. It's like a different tournament," said Seles.

"I knew I had to raise a little bit my level today because Julie has been playing some good tennis this summer, she had some good wins."

"I just wanted to come out there and play my game and today I was really good at that," added the second seed.

French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario stayed in form to beat Russian teenage sensation Anna Kournikova 6-3, 6-2.

The top-seeded Spaniard was champion here in 1994. It was her second straight win over Kournikova following her U.S. Open fourth round win after losing three times in a row.

French Open champion Arantxa Sanchez Vicario stayed in form to beat Russian teenage sensation Anna Kournikova 6-3, 6-2.

The top-seeded Spaniard was champion here in 1994. It was her second straight win over Kournikova following her U.S. Open fourth round win after losing three times in a row.

Schalke, in particular, have failed to impress this season and dissatisfaction is growing among the team with the style of Huub Stevens' coaching.

PENTHOUSE
FOR RENT IN SHMEISANI
LUXURIOUSLY FURNISHED
5698546

FOR RENT
FURNISHED APARTMENT (ROOF)
Third floor. Consists of 3 bedrooms, 2 salons, 2 bathrooms, big terrace, telephone line, central heating, lift.
Location: Um Utheina, Balqis Street, overlooking Amman.
Please call: 5527956

JORDAN FAST CLEAN
WOW 50% DISCOUNT!!
Marble polishing, dry cleaning for rugs, carpets and furniture. We also clean and disinfect water tanks.
Free demonstration.
Jabal Amman, Tel.: 4659504, 079/34566, 079/51710

ANNOUNCEMENT
THE ROYAL JORDANIAN ARABIAN HORSE SOCIETY
is pleased to announce the 10th annual "Festival of the Arabian Horse at Home," from Sept. 29 to Oct. 2. The festival features in hand and ridden classes from 9 a.m. until early evening at the Royal Stables, Al Hummar on Sept. 29, 30 and Oct. 2 with international entries and judges, and on Oct. 1 only purebred Arabian Horse racing at the Royal Race Club in Tunaib. Refreshments, snacks and amenities are available daily on site.
A judges' course will be held on the two days following the show also at the Royal Stables.
For further details please contact the Royal Stables Tel.: 5342104, 5348123.
Spectators are all welcome

ANNOUNCEMENT ISSUED BY JORDAN UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY MOBILE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT & FURNITURE FOR KING ABDULLAH HOSPITAL PROJECT

Jordan University of Science & Technology has decided to extend the deadlines for submission of bids to be as the following:

Tender No.	Closing date
19, 20, 33/98	Monday 9/11/1998
21, 22, 23/98	Tuesday 10/11/1998
24, 25, 26, 27/98	Wednesday 11/11/1998
28, 29, 30, 31/98	Sunday 15/11/1998
32, 34, 35, 38/98	Tuesday 17/11/1998
36, 37, 39/98	Wednesday 18/11/1998
40, 41, 42, 43/98	Saturday 21/11/1998
44, 45, 46, 47/98	Sunday 22/11/1998
48, 49, 50/98	Monday 23/11/1998
51, 52, 53/98	Tuesday 24/11/1998
17, 18, 54/98	Wednesday 25/11/1998

Opening of bids will be at 11:00 noon at the dates mentioned above.

Prof. Bassam Snobar
University Vice President
Chairman, General Tenders Committee.

In show of force Iran parades military near Afghan border

MASHHAD (AP) — More than 10,000 soldiers took part in a military parade in this holy city near the Afghan border Friday in a show of force meant to warn Afghanistan's Taliban militia.

The parade — and similar ones in the capital Tehran and Taibad, the closest Iranian town to Afghanistan — came amid rising tensions between Iran and the Taliban over last month's murder of Iranian diplomats by Taliban fighters.

In Tehran, the newly developed Shahab-3 missile with a 1,300-kilometre range capable of reaching Israel was displayed on a launcher as thousands of soldiers paraded with artillery, anti-aircraft guns and armoured personnel carriers.

The four-hour march in Mashhad's main square, attended by Defence Minister Ali Shamkhani and other senior officials, showed off dozens of tanks and personnel carriers as U.S.-made F-4 and F-5 jet fighters and Cobra helicopters flew overhead.

"If any enemy wants to do mischief against our country, they should know that they are playing with the tail of the lion," an announcer said during the parade. "We will throw them in history's garbage."

Shamkhani, a navy rear admiral, told the troops and thousands of Iranian spectators that Iran was trying to avoid war and would rather use its might against what Iran views as the real enemy, Israel.

"Today, Iran, with its powerful military forces, is completely ready to defend its national security... but we hope with the patience of Iranian officials we won't use this readiness against



Women from the Iranian mobilisation forces take part in a parade in Tehran on Friday to mark the 18th anniversary of the outbreak of the war with Iraq. President Mohammad Khatami addressed crowds at the parade and said Iran was ready to use force if diplomacy failed to ease the tension with neighbouring Afghanistan (AP photo)

Exchange of ambassadors in 'a very short time'

LONDON (AFP) — A top British diplomat said Friday that an exchange of ambassadors would happen in "a very short time" between Iran and Britain.

Derek Fatchett, minister of state at the Foreign Office, expects to visit Tehran in the next few weeks and a reciprocal visit is "definitely on the cards," he said at a press conference.

Asked about Salman Rushdie's safety, Fatchett added: "I am confident he is safe from the Iranians and we are very confident that the Iranians were speaking with authority."

Iran and Britain agreed Thursday to exchange ambassadors for the first time since 1989 after Tehran rejected a bounty placed on author Salman Rushdie's head.

The breakthrough after years of strained relations came at a meeting between British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi, when Tehran removed the last obstacle to improving relations that had soured over the Rushdie affair.

anyone except the occupying Zionist regime," Shamkhani said.

Mashhad, which is 900 kilometres northeast of Tehran, is home to the shrine of Imam Reza, an important Shiite Muslim saint. The American aircraft that flew over the parade are left over from the U.S.-Iranian alliance before the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Friday's parades came amid growing demands for vengeance by Iranian demonstrators. Iran has sent tens of thousands of troops to areas near the Afghan border, and the Taliban says it has moved 20,000 troops to the border to defend against attack.

Tensions between the two countries have risen since the Taliban overran the city of Mazar-e Sharif in northern Afghanistan on Aug. 8 and killed nine Iranian diplomats posted there and an

Iranian journalist.

The Taliban has returned the bodies of six Iranians to Tehran and has released 10 Iranian captives. Iran is demanding freedom for 50 more Iranian drivers it says the Taliban is holding.

Iran says the drivers were delivering humanitarian goods, but the Taliban claim they were bringing military supplies to Afghan factions fighting against the Taliban.

Khatami warns of force if Afghan diplomacy fails

TEHRAN (R) — President Mohammad Khatami said on Friday Iran would continue to work through diplomatic channels to ease tension with Afghanistan but was ready to use force if diplomacy failed.

"Our policy is convergence and defusing tensions... but implementation of this policy relies on having powerful armed forces," Khatami said at a ceremony in Tehran attended by top military commanders.

The president, in his first public remarks since returning from New York where he addressed the United Nations General Assembly on Monday, was speaking at commemorations of Sacred Defence Week when Iranians remember the start of the 1980-88 war with Iraq.

"We do our best through diplomatic channels to fight all the elements that cause tension but our nation and our armed forces are always ready to punish these elements if diplomacy fails," he said on a dais in Tehran's Azadi (Freedom) Square decorated with flowers and portraits of military commanders killed in the war.

Flanked by commanders of the army, navy, air force and Revolutionary Guards, Khatami said: "Today, in the oppressed Afghanistan, the rule of a reactionary, violent and illogical group is creating grounds for turmoil in the whole region."

"But our logical policy has led to the isolation of this reactionary group in the international community... we hope that this will punish the rogue group but we have the right to

punish the aggressors with force if we fail to provide peace in the region through normal means."

Tension between the two neighbours increased after the killing in Afghanistan last month of Iranian diplomats and a journalist, which the Taliban said was carried out by a renegade group of its fighters. It has promised to punish them.

Iran's judiciary chief Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi told a Friday prayers gathering at Tehran University: "The murderers of our diplomats and our journalist should definitely be put on trial."

"We will not let go of this issue. We call on international organisations and related governments to bring the perpetrators of this crime to the judiciary, to either international or Iranian courts," he said.

Iran has massed thousands of armed forces on its eastern border with Afghanistan in a show of force with the Afghan Taliban over the killings. It also says the Taliban should release dozens of Iranians it still holds.

A spokesman for the military exercises said on Thursday that the army had completed an operation to move 200,000 troops and equipment, including tanks and artillery, to the area of the manoeuvres, where another 70,000 Revolutionary Guards are also stationed after recent war games.

Islamic scholars in Afghanistan on Thursday urged restraint on the purist Sunni Muslim Taliban in its showdown with predominantly Shiite Iran. But they threat-

ened jihad — holy war — if Iranian forces invaded the country.

Khatami said the war with Iraq, in which up to a million people were killed or wounded on both sides, was the second longest war of the century after Vietnam.

Iraq said on Thursday it hoped relations with Iran, estranged for two decades, would strengthen soon.

"There is a reality and there is ambition in Iraq-Iran relations. The reality is that relations are not up to ambitions but they will help both Iraq and Iran to do better," Iraqi Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan said during a visit to a border checkpoint.

Iranian troops, some in combat fatigues, others in dress uniform, broke into a stiff-legged goose-step as they saluted Khatami in a ceremonial march past on Friday. Wounded veterans of the war with Iraq paraded in wheelchairs.

A phalanx of women in black chadors, the all-enveloping dress worn by traditional Muslim women in Iran, toted Kalashnikov assault rifles with red carnations in the barrels, also marched by. They were members of the basij, a volunteer militia commanded by the Revolutionary Guards.

Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, commander-in-chief of Iran's armed forces, was not present.

Troops also marched in Mashhad, capital of Khorasan province, bordering Afghanistan, Zahedan, close to the Afghan and Pakistan borders, and other Iranian cities.

Norwegian fisherman secures cigarettes lifetime

OSLO (AFP) — A Norwegian fisherman has won 40 cigarettes and a lighter into the lining of his fishing vessel's lifeboat, after an accident a few years ago left him adrift for 18 hours without smokes, the newspaper Paedertandsveien reported Friday. "It's one thing to be drifting at sea, but without smokes it's much worse," 54-year old Jan Petersen said, adding: "Cigarettes are more important than medicine in an emergency situation."

Petersen told the newspaper a submarine pulled his fishing smack to the bottom of the sea several years ago. Everything happened so quickly he didn't have time to grab his cigarettes.

Judge rules attending Janet concert 'important'

COLUMBUS (AP) — Getting a ticket to Janet Jackson's concert was the easy part. Attending was a bit more difficult for Timothy Bryant, who is under house arrest on tax charges, had to get a court order to attend the singer's concert Thursday. He can only leave home to go to work and run important errands. Other trips must be approved in advance by U.S. Magistrate Mark Abel Bryant, who bought his ticket five months ago, asked defence attorney Victor Merullo to try to get him permission to attend. "He must be quite a fan," Merullo said. "At first, I thought filing a motion would be inappropriate. But then I thought, 'Why not?'"

German trump-maker wants to patent Lewinsky name

LUEBECK (AFP) — Three Germans want to make money out of the Monica Lewinsky affair. They've applied to the German patents office for exclusive rights to her name. Manfred Amrein, Heinrich Wagner and Jens Alwert, from Luebeck in northern Germany, want to use the brand names "Monica Lewinsky" and "Monica L." What they hope to sell remains unclear, however.

Jim Carrey injured during wrestling scene

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Actor Jim Carrey was slightly injured by a professional wrestler on the set of his new film, "Man on the Moon," which depicts the life of another comic who died in a wrestling stunt. Carrey was taken Tuesday to the California Hospital Medical Centre and released soon after. He was scheduled to resume filming the story of the late comedian Andy Kaufman this week. According to Eric Gold, the actor's manager, the incident occurred after Carrey spat at the face of Jerry "The King" Lawler, the professional wrestler, as Kaufman had done years ago.

McCartney squashes rumours of being 'a secret meat-eater'

LONDON (R) — Former Beatle Sir Paul McCartney denies he is a secret meat eater but says that when he first became a full-fledged vegetarian "it seemed like there was a hole in the middle of the plate." In an interview published in the Guardian newspaper, McCartney described some of the turning points in his conversion to vegetarianism years ago along with his late wife, Linda, an animal rights activist who developed a line of meat-free food. He said he wanted to squash rumours that he was not as committed to vegetarianism as his late wife had been and "that I was a secret meat-eater."

German jailed on suspicion of passing nuclear secrets to Iraq

Agencies

A FORMER German engineer suspected of selling nuclear know-how to Iraq was jailed Friday, a day after he was arrested as he stepped off a plane in Frankfurt, court sources said.

A Munich judge ordered Karl-Heinz Schaab, 63, jailed after Schaab arrived from Sao Paulo, where he had been living for more than a year.

He was named in an international arrest warrant on charges of selling plans for the construction of centrifuges for enriching uranium for two million marks (\$1.1 million).

The daily Bild newspaper quoted his lawyer Michael Rietz as saying Schaab returning to Germany voluntarily, knowing he would be arrested, because he wanted to see his 96-year-old terminally ill mother again and

"come clean with his past."

He had been arrested in Rio de Janeiro in December 1996, but was released after six months when Brazilian authorities rejected an extradition request.

The Bild daily said Schaab was arrested by federal security officials after getting off the plane in Frankfurt.

Schaab is suspected of having supplied Iraq with plans that helped Baghdad in its nuclear weapons programme, Bild said, adding that the alleged sales took place prior to the 1991 Gulf war.

Meanwhile, international experts are to continue discussing Friday the results of laboratory tests of Iraqi missile remnants to analyse discrepancies in the findings, U.N. officials said.

A total 14 scientists from all five U.N. Security Council countries — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — and Switzerland are attending a meeting here convened by the U.N. Special Commission, which opened on Thursday.

The officials are examining the final results of tests carried out on 80 samples of Iraqi missile warhead remnants by French and Swiss laboratories.

The final results have not yet been made public, but none of the Swiss tests, nor initial findings by the French laboratory showed any trace of VX nerve gas, contrary to an analysis by a U.S. army lab.

U.N. Security Commission chief Richard Butler ordered the additional tests by France and Switzerland after

Iraq protested the results of the U.S. analysis in July, which showed that the lethal chemical agent was present in 11 of 44 samples.

The U.S. tests contradicted Iraqi assertions that Baghdad had never succeeded in filling its Al Hussein missile warheads with VX. Traces of nerve gas were found in 11 of 44 samples.

While the U.S. tests were a major political setback for Iraq in its attempt to ensure the lifting of an eight-year-old oil embargo, negative results from France and Switzerland would be a shot in the arm for Baghdad.

Under U.N. resolutions, the U.N. weapons inspectors charged with Iraqi disarmament must certify the dismantling of all Iraqi weapons of mass destruction before the oil embargo can be raised.

Albright urges Tripoli to accept deal on Lockerbie suspects

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urged Libya Thursday to accept the U.S. and British proposal to judge the two suspects in the Lockerbie bombing in the Netherlands.

"There is nothing now to negotiate," she said. "Libya should accept its own proposal and now it is time for all of you to encourage Libya to say yes," she told the U.N. Security Council during a ministerial session on Africa.

"We have done our part and it is now important for Libya to do its job."

Two Libyans are suspected of masterminding the bombing of a Pan Am Flight 103 that went down over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, killing all 270 aboard.

The United States and Britain said on August 24 that the trial of the suspects, Abdul Basset Ali Al Megrahi and Al Amine Khalifa Fhimah, could take place in the Netherlands, a neutral country, as long as it took place according to Scottish law and before a Scottish court.

Rushdie deal with Britain is a triumph for Khatami — analysts

TEHRAN (R) — The agreement between Britain and Iran over Salman Rushdie represents a triumph for moderate President Mohammad Khatami in his struggle with die-hard veterans of the Islamic revolution for the soul of Iran, analysts said on Friday.

But conservatives opposed to Khatami's policy of openness to the West could yet attempt to sabotage the deal announced in a statement issued by Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi in New York on Thursday, they said.

In a landmark exchange with his British counterpart Robin Cook on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, Kharazi stated Iran's formal assurance that it would not seek to kill the British writer, who has lived under an Iranian death threat for alleged blasphemy against Islam for almost a decade.

"The biggest step is the one taken by Britain. Iran has not changed its position substantially," one Iranian analyst said.

"The key was the perceived honesty of Khatami himself. It seems that when he puts his authority behind such things, the West is willing to take Iran's word for it."

It was not always so. Iran had tried to reassure Britain previously by saying it would not send agents to carry out the death sentence issued in a fatwa (religious decree) by the spiritual leader of Iran's Islamic revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, shortly before his death in 1989.

The fatwa was retribution for Rushdie's novel "The Satanic Verses," which Muslims said blasphemed against Islam.

Muslims had a duty to kill the Indian-born author if they could, it said. A wealthy Iranian foundation not directly linked to the government put a \$2 million bounty, increased last year to \$2.5 million, on Rushdie's head.

Islamic scholars said the fatwa could only be rescinded by the person who decreed it and, since he was dead, the death order would stand forever.

The government of Iran's reward for publicly dissociating itself from the fatwa is the opening of the way to closer cooperation between London and Tehran, with the



British author Salman Rushdie celebrates watched by Frances D'Souza from the International Rushdie Defence Committee at a press conference in London Friday (AP photo)

exchange of ambassadors as the first tangible step.

The risk to Rushdie, who is protected around the clock by armed British police, has diminished but remains real. The \$2.5 million reward for killing him has not been withdrawn.

"We will see whether, in the coming days and weeks, someone will try to sabotage the deal by coming out with a statement," an analyst said.

"It probably won't happen because they wouldn't have taken a step like this without the acquiescence of the hardliners."

No mention of the Rushdie affair was made on Friday in the sermon at weekly prayers at Tehran University, traditionally a platform for political pronouncements.

A key test will be next February — 10th anniversary of the fatwa — when there are usually proclamations that it should be carried out.

In the meantime, Khatami remains locked in a power struggle with conservatives who

still control such key levers of power as the armed forces, parliament and the judiciary.

The president, a Shi'ite Muslim clergyman with impeccable revolutionary credentials but a softer line on the development of the Islamic republic and its dealings with the West, swept conservatives aside in last year's election.

Nearly 70 per cent of voters put him in power with aspirations, especially among young people and women, for change and relief from the harsher realities of the revolution.

The president remains popular, Western diplomats in Tehran say, although some of his initiatives to promote his vision of a civil society within the rule of law have been frustrated by conservatives worried that this would mean the dilution of Islamic revolutionary principles.

Britain's Cook said on Friday that London sought to support modernising elements in Iran and "make sure that these first signs of glasnost are rewarded and encouraged."

Rushdie's next book: Life under death threat

LONDON (R) — A jubilant Salman Rushdie on Friday said his next book was likely to relate his experiences during the decade he spent hiding from an Iranian death threat.

"I've always wanted to write about this matter and I always felt the time to write about it was when I knew what the last chapter was," he told a packed news conference the day after Britain and Iran struck a deal to help ensure his security.

"I think that time might be very close and it's a very hot story and most of you don't know it, so I look forward to telling it," he said.

The book would chart Rushdie's descent into his own personal hell in February 1989 when Iran's then supreme leader, the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, issued a fatwa, or religious edict, condemning the author to death for blasphemy against Islam in his book "The Satanic Verses."

Rushdie and his backers campaigned tirelessly against the fatwa for almost a decade, saying there was much more at stake than the travails of a single author.

"Some incredibly important things were being fought for here...the freedom of the imagination, the great, overwhelming, overarching question of freedom of speech, the right of human beings to walk down the streets of their own country without fear," the Indian-born writer said.

Rushdie, 51, was lionised for

his 1981 novel "Midnight's Children" but the fatwa destroyed much of his hitherto comfortable life. He was given permanent police protection and forced to move dozens of times from one safe house to another.

"It's an extraordinary thing to see people walking down the streets of foreign cities, carrying your picture with the eyes poked out and calling for your death," he said.

Shortly after the fatwa was declared Rushdie's second wife, U.S. writer Marianne Wiggins, left him. He has since married again and has a son by his new companion, who has not been publicly identified, as well as a son by his first marriage.

"Their support for me has been the crucial factor which has allowed me to survive this," he said.

Rushdie said one of the most worrying things he had to endure was the climate of fear which his presence created.

British Airways said it refused to carry him as a passenger.

And plans to hold Friday's news conference in a local design centre were scrapped when someone else in the building protested.

During his time under the death threat, he slowly began to emerge from behind his screen and sometimes turned up unexpectedly at London dinner parties. Later he turned up for book signings and even attended soccer matches.

"I've been gradually reclaiming all kinds of freedoms over these years," Rushdie said.

"Normality is a very simple thing, yet it's the thing I've been denied. Spontaneity, to make one's own decision without referring to anyone else. To do something at the precise moment you feel like doing it, such as going for a walk," he said.

The author, who kept writing during his seclusion and published a couple of books, bubbled with enthusiasm.

"When I woke up this morning it was very exciting. There was the residual fear I would switch on the television and discover it wasn't true, so of course I switched on the television and fortunately there had been no alteration," he said.

"It does seem as though the [British-Iranian] agreement is solid and that gives me great happiness," he added, thanking successive British governments for their support and also the teams of bodyguards who never left his side.

Rushdie said he did not regret "The Satanic Verses" and bristled when asked whether he would apologise for having written it or bow to demands to have it removed from bookstores.

"There is not a chance in hell of the book being withdrawn. We have not fought a battle for freedom of speech to give in at the last moment," he said.

All he wants now is to return to the life of a writer.

"What I'm saying is: End of story. Time for the next story."